

Reflection from Fr. Colm on Wednesday of week 34 in Ordinary Time

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Wednesday 25th November 2020

Hello everybody, hope you're okay. Just listening to the news today and the reminder of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the economy's going to contract in a way that hasn't been seen for three centuries is rather frightening however it's a requirement in asking of us to persevere and endure on our journey through these very critical times that we now face in lockdown and with covid but with the anticipation and hope of a vaccine on the horizon.

However, it's for now that we have to persevere and I don't imagine we can have a more appropriate Gospel today when Jesus is reminding the early community of followers that you know that some of them are going to be put to death and on and on He goes in relation to the reminder of the sacrifices that are going to be made by followers of His. However, it's the line at the very end of the Gospel today where He tells His disciples *"Your endurance will win you your lives."* *"Your endurance will win you your lives."* Now that word endurance has caught my imagination because I think what an appropriate word today especially when we're resorting to all sorts of coping methods and coping philosophies be it mindfulness, be it meditation, be it yoga, lots of alternatives out there that people are resorting to, to enable them to endure but they actually don't mention the word, they rarely mention the word endurance in any of the more modern interpretations in any of these spiritual expressions but we do. We're very clear on this on a Christian level at least we should be without being too pessimistic it's a wonderful aspect.

Tolstoy wrote, *"A man on a thousand-mile walk has to forget his goal and say to himself every morning, 'Today I'm going to cover twenty-five miles and then rest up and sleep.'" Now you walkers, you pilgrims will be very familiar with those words. Once you start thinking of the long haul, the long journey you are in trouble.*

However, Epictetus the great, stoic philosopher said, *"You can bind up my leg but not even Zeus has the power to break my freedom of choice."* it means simply the ability or strength to continue or last especially despite fatigue, stress, or other adverse conditions.

I have a wonderful dog Ellie who for the last six months or so has been nursing a limp back leg. That leg will probably never move again and I have two wonderful vets, husband and wife, Jack and Fran and they've both reassured me, particularly one of them I think it was Fran said to me *"You would not believe an animal's capacity to endure pain. it's far greater than us"* And I see it every day, it's the great thing about having an animal, and so dependent on us but also that extraordinary stoical effort to endure pain. These are the examples that we need at this time especially in lockdown and I'm sure endurance is being called forth from all of us depending on the conditions that we're living in at this point in time. However, just a reflection, just a thought and to encourage you we will come out of this and though not looking at the end of the road as Tolstoy warns but looking on each day as it comes knowing that we will get there. God bless everyone.