

Reflection from Fr. Colm on Friday of week 14 in Ordinary Time

Audio posted to the Parish Website on Friday 10th July 2020

Good morning everybody. Just a reflection today on the Gospel because of its relevance I think to what's happening the Christian community in the world today because today's Gospel is very evidently about how we as Christians are not going to face an easy challenge in the practice of our faith but on the 3rd of May 2019 a headline from BBC News read "Christian persecution at near genocide level." This followed the massacre of Christians in Sri Lanka at the Easter Sunday of that same year. And a review was set up and was led by the Bishop of Truro the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen and he estimated that one in three people suffer from religious persecution, but Christians were the most persecuted religious group he found. This was at that time consolidated by the then British minister, foreign minister at the time Jeremy Hunt and then that also followed a request and a plea really from Prince Charles, nationwide appeal, to help persecuted Christians.

One of the reasons that has been put forward is indeed why we ignore it, is because of political correctness in these times of the real political correctness and in fact it was pointed out that without question there are parts of the world today in which the Christian communities are being totally wiped off the face of the earth. And statistics, numbers that are given to us, there's only 1.5% of the population in Palestine who are now Christians and in Iraq from 1.5 million before 2003, and we all know what happened in 2003, there's now only 120 thousand Christians.

Interestingly, Marie van der Zyl who's the president of the board of deputies of British Jews said, commenting on the report, she said, *"Whether it is authoritarian regimes, or bigotry masked in the mistaken guise of religion, reports like this remind us of the many places in which Christians face appalling levels of violence, abuse, and harassment"*

So I think not only just Christians but even sincere genuine practice of religious faith is under enormous threat today and it's really a time for us to pray for the many Christians throughout the world today and indeed religious and persecuted people of all denominations within the context of Jesus beginning today's Gospel by saying, *"Remember, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as serpents and harmless as doves."* Good morning everyone.