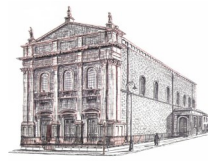




**PARISH OF ST. AGATHA**  
**6TH/7TH FEBRUARY 2021**



Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm. : 087 9117575 Office:  
 Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council  
**Jesus I Trust in You E-mail : office@stagathasparish.ie Website: www.stagathasparish.ie**

**ARCHBISHOP DERMOT FARRELL HOMILY (in part)**

This homily comes from Sunday’s Mass in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Ballymun where Josh Dunne lived. In the first reading the words in the book of Job strike a chord with us: “My life is like a breadth, and my eyes will never again see joy.” On the other hand, life is also a gift of unfathomable beauty. God gives us a choice. We can either grow weary over the days we experience life as drudgery, or we can emerge from bitter lament, to declare that the world is “new every morning” (Lamentations 3:23). Most of us spend our days somewhere between these two extreme.

The story of Job has become the story of one family in this community in recent days: the Dunne family have lost their son, Josh. Suddenly, darkness has descended upon them, their neighbours, and their friends. I share in the grief of the family of Josh Dunne, and pray that they may experience consolation, healing, and reconciliation through God’s grace.

Where do we begin? First, human life is sacred, and we need to address the threat to life posed by knife violence with the full strength of our Catholic faith. Knife crime and violence, which is self-destructive, must always be condemned. Let us not forget that our Lord knew first-hand what violence could do—and never succumbed to it himself. Secondly, we have become desensitised to knife violence and the resulting tragic deaths. People of peace remain shocked by all manifestations of violence. Violence—on the street or in the home—is never “the way things are.” While laws and regulations may help, we need a different way of thinking which turns such a dominant and destructive culture on its head. We need to come to the realisation that in wielding a knife, everything can be lost, and nothing gained.

Thirdly, there is a spiritual issue in that there is a loss of empathy towards other human beings. The truth of *who* we are—and of *what* we are—is at stake. Genuine empathy is the entry point into the commandment to love your neighbour and to live in peace. If the problem of violence in our country is to be overcome, we need a spiritual and moral conversion. We need to recover how we truly are—what it means to be a neighbour, what it means to be a sister or a brother, friend and neighbour.

Like the disciples in today’s gospel the draw is nearly always to go back to what we knew, and indeed where we are comfortable. Jesus leads his disciples: we follow. Of course, that is not to say this is easy. But courage is the mark of faith. In the end, the person of dynamic faith is not a credulous person, but a person of courage. Today we need God-given courage to communicate our vision of non-violence to a culture advocates carrying knives and wielding them to intimate people or settle disagreements.

We can look to today’s Gospel for ways out of our malaise. Like Simon Peter’s mother-in-law in today’s Gospel, we encounter Jesus and our world is radically changed. When Jesus says, “For this purpose I have come,” we are reminded that we too have a purpose in life. When the power in Jesus healed a physical illness, it pointed to his spiritual healing. Jesus’s healing miracles point beyond themselves to a universal need and mission. Like the people of His day, we need to see the values of His kingdom and to listen to the voice of the Spirit.

There is a line in today’s responsorial psalm which states: “The Lord heals the broken hearted.” Today, we pray to the Lord for the one who has been mortally wounded in this latest act of inhuman violence. We pray for innocent people accidentally involved in evil. Bring the light of consolation, forgiveness, and healing to all broken hearts; Lord, console them with Your strength and, at the same time, take away any hatred and a desire for revenge. Bring us to serve our sisters and brother in new ways and with a new life. We should have no hesitation in bringing our brokenness to God in prayer. Sharing ourselves with God in this way is not quite the same as asking God for something; we are telling our story to God, opening that story to God’s presence, to God’s influence. We pray that we may be able to offer up whatever is on our hearts and minds to God and in doing that to find new strength, hope and courage.

**PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW IS VISITED BY JESUS AND HEALED**

In today’s Gospel (Mk 1:29-39), we hear that Peter was married under the Old Covenant Law, but the Fathers of the Church, such as St. Clement of Alexandria, believed that his wife had died before Jesus came to call Peter, into a New Eternal Marriage, which is the New Eternal Covenant with the New Church. Peter’s deceased wife’s family were not forgotten, as we see the disciples including Peter, brought Jesus to his sick mother-in-law’s bedside. Her fever symbolises the wound of sin and how it spiritually tires the soul. Jesus touches and heals her and immediately she is healed and rises, with the desire to serve and wait on Him. His reaching out and taking her by the hand and helping her up also symbolises Jesus reaching out to us after this life and raising us up from the slumber of death to Eternal Life. In Heaven we will willingly **wait on Him**. We must ask Him to heal us from the fever of our sins now before He comes to take us.

**LIVING TO MEET ETERNAL LIFE**

We know Peter lived waiting in expectation for the Coming of the Messiah, because when Andrew, who was Peter’s brother had met Jesus, he immediately went to Peter and said; **We have found the Messiah**. Andrew then brought Peter to Jesus, who looked at him and said, **You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas** (John 1:41-42). Not only was Peter waiting and destined to meet Jesus, but Jesus was waiting to meet Peter and appoint him as the First Pope of the New Church. Just like the Virgin Mary and Joseph were waiting for the coming or the birth of the Messiah, where they lived in a chaste and holy marriage. There is a strong possibility that Peter lived in a similar chaste and holy marriage where he and his wife were both waiting for the Messiah.

**SIN CREATES OBSTACLES TO FOLLOW CHRIST**

Jesus uses many ways to highlight and symbolise sin and how it debilitates and weakens our souls. Fever, leprosy, poison, sickness are examples used to highlight the existence of unclean spirits and the devil who wander around the world corrupting our bodies. He wants us to be always aware that the devil never stops trying to lead us into temptation, for the sole purpose of getting us to fallout with God by sinning. Satan wants to take possession of a spiritually healthy soul and make it spiritually sick from sin. In today’s Gospel (Mk 1:29-39), Jesus directly **casts out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who He was**. Jesus did this because they are not His disciples. He came into the world to bring Eternal Life, by dying on the Cross and Rising from the Dead, for those who are His disciples. He wants to be recognised as the **Crucified Christ** which is the symbol of Christianity. The devils rejected Heaven and now live in eternal death of suffering and hardship. But they knew Him because it was He who cast them down to Hell.

**AFTER A BUSY DAY JESUS IS UP EARLY NEXT MORNING**

*In the morning, long before dawn, He got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon (Peter) and his companions set out in search of Him, and when they found Him they said, ‘Everybody is looking for You.’ He answered, ‘Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came.’ And He went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.* Jesus finds many human hearts a lonely place to dwell, but He never gives-up praying for our conversion. Always praying that a person with a hardened heart, who has given it over to the devil, would repent and change their pagan lifestyle. Let us become increasingly aware of the Divine Guest living in our hearts and to acknowledge His Presence, by communicating with Him through a daily prayer life. Let us begin to **wait on Him** like Peter’s mother-in-law. The Joy of Heaven is where Jesus will be the centre of our lives, so let’s begin now to place Him there. God Bless, Fr. Brendan.