

Reflection for the Feast of Christ the High Priest 4th June 2020

After more than 10 weeks we are still in a lockdown situation. How are you coping with the restrictions on everyday life? Are you wondering when it will all end and we can go back to normal? What will the new normal look like anyway and will things ever be the same again?

Apart from food shops and one or two other vital shops and services everything else is still closed, Shopping centres and High streets are like ghost towns. Some people are quite enjoying the peace and quiet and quieter way of life while others are feeling like the world as we knew it has come to a standstill and can't wait to start shopping again.

For us as Catholics many of us are wondering when we will be able to visit the church again and say some prayers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and most, if not all of us, are looking forward to coming back to Mass again. Some people are beginning to ask very fundamental questions such as, if we cannot attend mass and are deprived of the sacraments, what is it that actually makes us Catholic? How am I different to my non Catholic neighbours if I am barred from attending church and doing all the various parish activities I normally do in the course of a week?

The answer lies in today's feast of Christ the High priest. Christ had a threefold ministry while here on earth, as priest, prophet and king and we share in this ministry through our baptism. After the water has been poured over our head we are anointed with the oil of Chrism as priest, prophet and king. This what makes us different as Christians, even when we are unable to practise our faith in the normal way. It may not be something we think much about but it is central to our identity as Christians and our understanding of the significance of Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross.

Many of us are watching mass on line and will hear today's gospel proclaimed. It is the account of the Agony in the Garden, when Jesus prayed that if it were possible to avoid suffering and death then...*let this chalice pass me by*. As a man he didn't want to die but he knew he had to in order to atone for our sins through the shedding of his blood. Jesus was both priest and victim on Calvary, a role which is now assumed by the priest at mass when he offers the Holy Sacrifice. The priest takes the place of Jesus at the consecration when he utters the words which will change the bread and wine into his body and blood. Jesus is our High Priest by offering himself as the sacrifice that takes our sins away and our faith in this miraculous event is what makes us Catholics and gives us our identity. We can share in this reality by offering our own little sacrifices to God, not burnt offerings as in Old Testament times, but acts of praise and thanksgiving, acts of loving service to others and ultimately our whole lives.

May the Lord bless us and deepen our faith and Our Lady protect us.

Deacon Kevin

If you have any comment on these reflections I would love to hear them, please email me: kevinconnor7451@gmail.com