

Webcam Broadcast C-19 8

Hello everyone! I hope you are safe and well.

It's Monday 11th May 2020.

Over recent days I found myself reflecting on whether I had ever experienced anything like this present crisis before in my life.

Comparisons with what went before can at times help us get perspective on where we find ourselves at the present time.

And so I found myself going back in my mind to the winter of 1962/63. I was 10 years old and there was a weather event that winter that confined us at home for a long time.

There was snow and frost in extreme amounts.

My recollection is that it started snowing just before Christmas Day 1962 and the snow continued to fall for weeks. My family lived in the country, 35 kilometers from Tallaght.

The experience in the city may have been different.

In my mind's eye I can still see the big flakes of snow falling slowly. Our house was eventually covered in snow. Boundaries disappeared in the drifts caused by blizzards.

I can still see the wonderful designs made by frost on the glass in the windows of our house and on various surfaces. Full buckets of water were frozen solid over-night.

My father had to abandon the car outside our house because he couldn't get it off the road. He then took to the tractor and used it to go to the shop, and to Mass the first Sunday of the New Year. But he had to abandon the tractor too, and then it was down to walking through the deep snow, which filled up the road outside our house.

Snow gradually covered the house completely, and each morning my father had to dig a tunnel through the snow to get out of the house to tend to animals. You could say we were rightly "cocooned".

The local shop, which was 3 kilometres away, ran out of supplies because the road from Dublin was impassible.

The army dropped food parcels attached to balloons from the air in the neighbourhood. I can't recall now whether we got any falling near our home. I do remember concern over fodder for animals.

My recollection is that school was closed for about 6 weeks. I remember meeting up with neighbours my age, and older and younger, to play in the snow. We had a field with a good slope. They had the bonnet of a Morris Minor car, which made a super snow slay. In this fray I heard words and language I had never heard before.

The main differences between then and now, I think, are that then we were not trying to avoid a deadly virus; and we were not asked by Government to stay at home. We simply had no option. Travel was impossible. Food supplies were an issue.

Back then there certainly was a lot of hardship. It was an ordeal for many people, especially for those living in the country and living in isolated places. But somehow we got through it then, and, my hunch is, we'll get through it now.

A different pace of life has been imposed on us now, and maybe that's not such a bad thing. Going to the shop is a different experience now to what it was just a matter of weeks ago, and it will continue so for the foreseeable future. Gloves, masks, sanitizer, physical distance, are likely to be the order of the day for a long time to come.

Places of work will have to be modified according to the Government Work Safety Protocol.

Every aspect of our lives will be affected in ways we have not yet begun to think about. For instance, it's hard to see how passing the collection baskets at Mass can continue when attendance at Mass resumes, whenever it does. We'll have to have ways for Cashless Giving installed in our churches, along with the Donate facility on the Parish Website. This will be the safer and healthier option for the future.

The great philosopher Socrates said: *The unexamined life is not worth living.* From now on every aspect of life will have to be scrutinised to check if it is Covid-19 safe.

I hope this extraordinary time we are in is giving you all the opportunity to appreciate family and friends a little more, and giving you time to reflect and to pray.

As we move from Spring to Summer 2020, the cherry blossom fades and the lilac comes into its own. This movement reminds us of the power of nature and the resilience and adaptability of life on Earth.

Pockets of snow remained from the winter of 1962/63 into the month of June on high ground. Then the snow was gone.

As Covid-19 restrictions are modified and gradually eased, we need to remember that the virus Covid-19 has not gone away.

We are advised that Covid-19 is still in the community. So:

Stay at home.

Practice proper hand hygiene.

And talking, coughing and sneezing etiquette.

And keep the 2 metre physical distance.

This is how we save lives.

Until next time.

Slán agus beannacht.