

Webcam Broadcast C-19 26+6

Hello Everyone! I hope you are all safe and well.

It's Monday 9th November 2020.

My basic Message this Monday is:

Religion is good for you, and we need that goodness to sustain us through the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Any serious crisis, [and what more serious crisis could there be than the one we are in?] is a summons to reread the Bible afresh.

You may have heard it said that the human brain is hard-wired for the things of God. What this suggests is that humans have an innate capacity for belief in God, and that we are moved by our very nature to respond to the challenging call of Jesus to love God and love the neighbour, and all that implies. There may even be a 'God-Spot' in the human brain that connects with a sense of the sacred.

Whether or not this is the case, however, over recent decades neurologists have discovered that the Right hemisphere of the human brain is essential to the creation of poetry, music and religion. The Left hemisphere of the human brain, on the other hand, specializes more in language, analysis and problem solving. The Right hemisphere, which tended in the past to be overlooked by scientists, has a holistic rather than an analytical vision. It sees each thing in relation to the whole and perceives the interconnectedness of reality. What all this means, in simplistic terms, is that in order to be well balanced and well adjusted as human beings, both sides of our brain need to be brought into play.

Modern education tends increasingly to privilege the scientific endeavour and marginalize what we used to call the humanities. In other words, education today tends to favour the Left side of the brain and neglect the Right side of the brain. This, however, is regrettable because it means that we are in danger of cultivating only one half of our mental capacities fully.

As with normal food, if you eat only one thing, or too much of the same thing, you are going to end up sick. That's why there is a saying: Variety is the spice of life.

It's good then to note that the recent Ad. from the HSE on radio for how to stay well during this cruel and prolonged time of the Covid-19 Pandemic, now under Level 5 Restrictions, places emphasis on activities associated with each side of the human brain. 5 are mentioned: Keep active, Stay connected, Get creative, Eat well, Mind your mood.

To that list we could well add: Stay steadfast in your Faith, Pray, Look out caringly for all whom you encounter through the day. I add these because true religion brings benefits to all of us.

Surely this is why religion came to the fore on the human agenda right from the start. Wonder, marvel, delight seem to have been part of the particular human response to being alive and to life on Planet Earth from the beginning. The mystery of life and death evokes a response from us on a special level of emotion, affection, care, but also of fear and dread.

Encounter with the Transcendent, encounter with God, as we saw last time in the case of Moses, has been described as the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, a Latin phrase meaning a mystery before which humanity both trembles and is fascinated, is both repelled and attracted.

On the one hand, the experience of God can be overwhelming, the mystery that repels.

On the other hand, God can also appear as awe-inspiring, as the mystery that attracts, by which humans are irresistibly drawn to the glory, beauty, adorable quality, and the blessings that faith endows.

As we anticipate the great unknown of what life and society *post* Covid-19 may entail, we might wonder, what can sustain us into that future?

Part of the answer will surely be calling on the resources of the Left as well as the Right sides of our brain, gifted to us through our unique evolution. This will include the rediscovery of things that may have been lost to us during the Anthropocene epoch.

The Anthropocene is a name given to the period of the last 200 years or so when, driven initially by the industrial revolution, humans for the first time shaped what would happen on Planet Earth. One consequence is the disaster we are now coming to know as Climate Change and the loss of biodiversity, of countless species, with all its consequences.

The Covid-19 Pandemic is perhaps bringing us face to face with some our limitations and dependence.

That new agenda of *The Post Covid-19 Epoch* might include a rediscovery of some of the things lost during the Anthropocene, such as,

- Education that will help balance the Left and Right sides of the human brain.**
- Action on Climate Change that will promote the Common Good and a deeper acknowledgement of our interconnectedness and our interdependence.**
- Respect for all life and life forms on Planet Earth**
- Acknowledgement of the reality of human sinfulness and its consequences.**
- A rediscovery of the ground of our being in God, and the pursuit of what the Letter of James calls 'true religion'.
James 1:27.**

The Psalms of the Bible are ancient songs that reflect just about every concern of the human heart. Psalm 4, for instance, expresses confidence that God's protective hand hovers over us in our time of need. Here are just 2 lines from that Psalm:

**'Who can bring us happiness?' many say.
Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord! Ps 4:7.**

**Be gentle and patient with yourself in these difficult and
uncertain times.**

Tóg bog é.

Until next time.

Keep safe.

Slán agus beannacht.