

Webcam Broadcast C-19 26+7

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

It's Monday 16th November 2020.

My basic Message this Monday is:

Sin is part of the Mystery of Evil and of the human story. Leaving sin out of the account of the human condition deprives us of seeing the full picture. The doctrine of Original Sin is, so to speak, the “reverse side” of the Good News that Jesus is the Saviour of all people, that all need salvation, and that salvation is offered to all through Jesus Christ.

Sin hasn't gone away. We know it in our hearts. It is apparent in the litany of crimes we hear about on a daily basis in news bulletins. Perhaps we might say there is much evidence of unredeemed man about.

Even though it does not use the word sin, Psalm 14 is a lament at the surrounding godlessness, clearly stating what sin can lead to. It begins as follows:

The fool has said in his heart:

“There is no God above.”

***Their deeds are corrupt, depraved;
not a good man is left.***

I propose to take a very brief look at the question of sin in our Judaeo-Christian tradition.

When the sacred authors of the Bible were moved to write about the origins of humanity and to explain the human condition, they often used the telling of a story as a way of helping people understand better what it means to be human.

And so, when it came to grappling with the origins and reality of sin, these sacred authors wrote the story of the Creation of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the Serpent, and the Fall.

The picture they drew was more about explaining the meaning of how things were, than it was about a factual account of what had taken place.

**People in ancient times were confronted by the same reality that faces people today. How do you explain death, evil, sin? They too observed what moved the poet John Milton to write these words:
*As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers ...***

Accounts of human origins and sin appear in all ancient civilisations as well as in the Bible. These accounts emerged in the light of the pressing questions faced by all the ancient religious stories:

Why are the gods immortal, but not we humans?

Why do we receive punishment from the gods in life?

What is our fate?

The story of Beginnings in the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis, is that there is a clear connection between the one true God's loving care for humanity, the moral refusal of people to obey this one true God's plan for humanity, and the rightful sentence of mortality that now burdens us, together with the backbreaking labour now required to make it possible to live on earth.

In the Bible, when God created Adam and Eve, they were endowed with abundant blessing, happiness and grace. They knew neither evil nor death. But at a certain point, the Serpent, later to be called the devil, arrived on the scene, and lured those humans to decide not to follow God's plan. And from that moment things went badly wrong. Sin entered the world. This sin, committed at humankind's origins, we call Original Sin.

We believe that in Adam and Eve all have sinned, which means that the original offense committed by them caused human nature, common to all people, to fall to a state in which it bears the consequences of that offense for all time. Original Sin is transmitted with human nature, not by imitation, but by propagation, and that it is thus proper to everyone.

Sin probably wouldn't qualify as a popular topic in our times. The temptation nowadays is to explain sin as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social structure.

Sin puts the finger on personal responsibility for wrongdoing. Sin ruptures our communion with God. Sin is why Jesus came. The Angel of the Lord said to Joseph that Mary, his betrothed, "will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins." (Mtt 1:21). Throughout history, the Church has been marred by sin. St Patrick began his Confession with the words: *My name is Patrick. I am a sinner.* Pope Francis described himself when he became Pope as a sinner.

The Jesus Prayer, which has brought light and consolation to countless numbers down through the ages, quotes the words of the blind beggar Jesus healed near Jericho: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.* (Lk 18:35ff).

As we move into the final weeks of the calendar year with short days and long nights, there can be a yearning deep within for a light to follow, a guide to accompany and a destination to welcome us through the mess that at times is life.

The one true God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition responded to that yearning in the Birth of Jesus, which we will commemorate and celebrate in less than 6 weeks time.

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

Tóg bog é.

Until next time.

Keep safe.

Slán agus beannacht.