

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**Our world is most times a fragile place**

Michael Commane

Do you find yourself getting out of bed these mornings, asking yourself is this really happening? I do.

I'm thinking I nearly dodged a carefree existence from birth to death.

Yes, there have been wars across the world, there have been the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland, poor people everywhere experience terrible privations, but my generation was the first in a long time that did not have to suffer the hell of war. What must it have been like during the 1914 - 1918 and 1939 - 1945 wars for those on the front, for the millions suffering raping, bombings, shortages and rationing? The unspeakable crimes at the death camps must never be forgotten.

The horrendous suffering that people living in the developing world keep experiencing is beyond our comprehension.

Last year I read Vasily Grossman's 'Stalingrad'. I'm back reading the book for a second time. In these days of Covid-19 it takes on a new meaning. It's a story of inexplicable pain and suffering.

Grossman worked as a journalist with the Red Army.

It tells the story of the epic battle at Stalingrad, now Volgograd.

It was here that the German Army was torn asunder by the doggedness and genius of the Russian people. Grossman takes the Shaposhnikov family, living in Stalingrad and traces their fate in the lead up to the battle and then during the bloody months of the battle itself, which lasted from August 1942 to February 1943.

The fortitude of the Russian people and how against all the odds they routed the invader has to be admired.

We have no idea what lies ahead of us. Will this end in war? Trump said at one of his recent White House press briefings, that the US had so much ammunition they did not know what to do with it.

Covid-19 has stopped us all in our stride. I can imagine many might even have asked about their own mortality.

Only last week a cousin forwarded me a genealogy of my mother's family. Maybe it was the mood I was in but as I looked at the names, their lives, what they did, the children they had, the word accidental came into my head.

Isn't so much about our lives accidental? Something I remember from student days: one of the significant differences between us and God is that God is not accidental, whereas we are.

I've been thinking about that these days.

**New Parish Webcam**

As the Government and health authorities have mandated a 'stay at home' policy, Mass will celebrated in Three Patrons via our new webcam on the website: **rathgarparish.ie**.

The following is the schedule for this week:

**Sunday 12 noon**

**Monday 11am**

**Wednesday 11am**

**Friday 11am**

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Mass on the **Beechwood Avenue webcam** is as follows:

**Sunday 10.00am**

**Tuesday 11.00am**

**Thursday 11.00am**

**Daily Adoration** is cancelled until further notice, but the Church will remain open from 11am – 6.00pm for personal prayer and visitation.

**Three Patrons Art Gallery** Jackie Hearne, our Pastoral Worker, has now set up a new Whatsapp group called Three Patrons Art Gallery, where children's artwork will be displayed, and there will be a different topic each week.

If you would like your child to be part of this group, please contact Jackie at: 087 7422653

**A Virtual Pilgrimage to Knock with the Archdiocese of Dublin – this Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>**

We had planned to hold the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock this month and, unfortunately, we cannot do so due to the current restrictions caused by COVID-19.

Instead, with the cooperation of our friends at Knock Shrine, we will hold a virtual pilgrimage on Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup> commencing at 2.30pm with the Rosary, and Mass will be celebrated at 3.00pm.

<https://www.knockshrine.ie/watch-live.html>

- 2.30pm: Rosary
- 3.00pm: Pilgrimage mass celebrated by the Rector of Knock Shrine, Father Richard Gibbons
- 3.45pm: Benediction
- 4.00pm: Virtual visit to the Apparition Chapel
- 4.15pm: Opportunity to place a petition, light a candle or have a mass said online.