

Fr. Martin's Reflection – 08/01/21 Bulletin

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This past four weeks my home county of Monaghan has experienced three very sudden and tragic deaths. They were Philip Traynor, Brendan Óg Ó Dufaigh, and Adam Mc Cormick. Philip came to the U.S. in 1984 and worked in the construction industry learning all he needed to learn before establishing his own flooring company, All-Boro Flooring. On the morning of Saturday July 10, Philip came back from a walk and went to get ready for the day, but sadly took a massive heart attack and died. Philip's children asked me to celebrate their Dad's funeral Mass and the gospel passage I chose was Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." I am not aware of Philip's Sunday observance and I don't think it matters, but I am aware of his living out his Sunday observance. In the early years of his life in New York, every Monday for 20 years Philip made sandwiches and made the journey to Manhattan to give them to those who needed them. Philip was also very aware of the many Irish that were coming to America and the situation that they found themselves in. He became very involved in the Irish Center in Yonkers, NY, giving time, money and materials.

Brendan Óg Ó Dufaigh was a very gifted and talented 19-year-old Gaelic football player. He captained the under 20 county team and hours before his tragic death he led them to the Ulster final. Pre-COVID times he would attend early morning mass before going to a game, and always had his rosary and cross in his kit bag. I know Brendan's Mom and Dad, two people I really admire. Faith was the foundation on which they built everything.

Adam Mc Cormick was 14 years old when he went for a swim in a local lake. Unfortunately, he got into difficulty and was airlifted to a hospital but died later that night. I did not know Adam personally, but I know his Mom's family very well and I know they have experienced many tragedies in their lives. I can only imagine the devastation they must be feeling at this time.

I know your heart must be low reading about these three different tragedies but as I read the first reading from Exodus and the 'desert' experience the Hebrew people were experiencing living in a wilderness with nothing around them to give them hope, a desert that is barren and empty. Their cry was a cry of desperation, 'why did you bring us here, why did you do this to us, why did you not leave us alone?' As I read this my thoughts went to the families of Philip, Brendan and Adam and the desert experience they must be experiencing and what will strengthen them?

Unfortunately, this world will provide us with much suffering; the suffering is not from God, but the help we need is from God. In Exodus, God hears the cry of the people and provides for them, "I will now rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily portion." And "In the evening twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning, you shall have your fill of bread, so that you may know that I, the Lord, am your God."

Jesus, too, makes the same statement, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." And then Jesus states, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

If you are experiencing this desert experience, come to God and allow God to feed you. If you know someone who is experiencing life in the desert, bring their name to God and pray that they will allow God to feed them. Do not give up on praying for them. It is not God you need to convince, it is they that need to be convinced. They need the food God provides to sustain them through this desert time.

May you remain safe in the care of God.

Fr. Martin