

Fr. KEVIN DILLON'S HOMILY DATED 21.07.18

People these days wear all sorts of interesting articles of clothing. One article of clothing which you don't see too often (mainly in the sporting field, but not always), is a headband. There's a few famous ones. John McEnroe, Pat Cash, Bruce Doull. And the one I really wanted to say was not a sportsperson. It's a fellow called Peter FitSimons, and he's one of Australia's prolific and most read writers. He's written a lot of very large books, an amazing output of work, particularly on the wars of Gallipoli and the Kokoda trail and so on. But about 7 or 8 years ago he produced a book about his own childhood. He grew up in the outer suburbs of Sydney, mainly during the 60s. And he called it 'A Simpler Time'. He's a little younger than I am, but it was still much the same sort of era. It was before Sunday trading, it was before late night trading, before road rage. It was before when kids could play cricket or footy on the street and yell out "car!", and shift the wickets and maybe move over to the side because once in a while a car would come through. It was a time when people really could leave their doors open, and even leave the keys in the ignition of the car in the driveway.

Things that would be absolutely unthinkable. And it was a time, to a degree, when people *had* time. Made time. It was nowhere near as busy as the life that we just take for granted now. And if you want proof of that, just go to a doctor or a dentist waiting room, and no way will you see people just sitting. The phones will be out, or the tablets (not the ones that the doctor prescribes, but the other ones), and they'll be combing through all sorts of different things on the internet and the papers and whatever. There is a sense within the context of today, where the whole notion of how we use time is a major challenge for us. And there's one problem about time. We've got lots of phrases that we use about time. We can talk about time management, and that's important. We can talk about quality time, particularly when people talk about time spent with their children. For example, "I give my son quality time, mightn't be much of it but it's quality time." And the phrase that's probable most important for us to take on board is the one we don't really like, and it's borrowed time. Cos guess what. Each and every one of us, we're on borrowed time.

Why? Because we can't buy it, and we can't steal it. We're given a certain amount of time and we don't know how much we've got. We don't like to think about that too often, but the reality is that all of our time has been lent to us by God. But He hasn't told us how much we've got. And sure, He wants us to manage it well, He wants us to use it as quality for those around us, but it's a bit of a struggle. And in the last maybe 15, 20 years, we might say well we've crowded it up so much. And one of the things which happens when we crowd up our timetable, is that it's crowded because of the expectations of others. Other people place on us, and we on them, unbelievable expectations in terms of how we should use our time. The classic phrase that's been around for 10 or 15 years is "I've sent you an email and you haven't replied. How long ago? 90 seconds ago, it's on your phone and you haven't got back to me."

So the pressure builds up where there is so much to do, so little time. And in the context of that, our relationship with one another can deteriorate. We might think well this is a really modern problem. But in other ways, scientific advancement has given us more time. Because when it gets dark, we can turn on the light. And we can work longer hours in terms of making use of the time that we've got. And we've got shift work, and we have all sorts of transport and we can get from one place to the other so much more quickly. Doesn't that give us more time? Well, sort of. It crowds us up and gives us a greater expectancy of others. But before we kid ourselves too much, we need to look at what happened 2000 years ago. This little story, which might go in one ear and out the other, of Jesus, his ministry and his apostles. They were busy, and we were told in the Gospel that they were so busy they didn't have enough time to eat. Jesus says, "hey fellas, this is not right. We've gotta slow down a bit so let's get away from the crowd and go and find somewhere where we can take a little rest and just ease up for a while. So follow me."

So off they get into the boat and they think that no one will know where they're going. They mightn't have had Twitter or the opportunity to text, but somehow or other we're told in the gospel that the crowd knows where they're going. And not only did they go there, they got there first. So imagine pulling into the boat, and here are all this crew on the shore. What is fascinating though, is the way Jesus reacts to this. And I guess that this is the real lesson that we can take on board from there as we

can of anything that's an example of Jesus. One would imagine the sense of frustration, even anger, that would be there in many of us. Imagine if you were trying to get away just for an hour or two, and all of the people who put the demands on you whoever they may be, whether it's the people at work, home, next door neighbours or whatever. Just when you thought you found your way to a quiet coffee shop to have a cappuccino on your own, or maybe with one or two trusted friends; all the mob that puts the demands on you, they're all there. What would we do?

There's a real example there from Jesus. He and the apostles are pushed. But he says this is the way it is. You could almost see him taking a deep breath, looking around at the apostles and saying "that's the way it is. They're here, we're here. They have needs and we're able to help because they are like sheep without a shepherd." "We wanted a break, we haven't got one. But rather than lament it all, let's get on with what we have to do." It's a magnificent, generous response that Jesus gives. And living in a world like you and I do which is more demanding, it's something which can give us a sense of direction. Because what do we do when people put so many demands and expectations on us? We can go into the corner or street and scream, we can maybe abuse people who are not deserving of it, we can get all pent up inside so that stress and everything that goes along with it is a part of our lives, and we're going to pay with it with our health and so on. Or we can take the deep breath, ease back, say "well, this is the way it's going to be. Let's do the best we can."

That's what Jesus did. And that's what we call time management and in a good sense. Not in a bureaucratic sense of trying to adjust to every moment of the day. But just saying "what's important? On my borrowed time, how best do I use this. What does the Lord want me to do with the time that I've got? Sure, I can't do everything, so what're the most important things. And then whatever I can't do I just say well, up to you." So let's pray as we look at Jesus managing his time, and his time was all too short. Just 3 years of public ministry. But we have it here, we have the record of it here in this Book. And so that time, those 3 years has become 2000. And we are learning from it, and we savour it, and we build on it. So it's not always exactly as it seems. Was it a simpler time in years gone by? Probably. Are we going to change the expectations and pace of life that we've got today? Probably not. So

like Jesus, take a deep breath, and try and sort out the things that we need to deal with. And ask the Lord's guidance to use the time that we have, the borrowed time that is given us. The time we can't manufacture ourselves, the time that has been entrusted to us. Whatever it is, to use it well, to use it in the service of the Lord, and of one another. And whatever we can't do, say "well, I've done my best and I can't do anymore." If we look at our time that way, we're really following the example of Jesus himself. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.