

This has been a week of remembering – earlier in the week there was the official memorial service for those who died in the 1916 Rising. Over this weekend right across Europe people have been remembering – remembering the end of the war in Europe in 1945, 70 years ago.

So I want to ask a few ‘Do you remember’ questions

Do you remember - the first time you rode a bicycle, the day you learned to swim?

Do you remember your first day at work?

Do you remember your wedding day?

Do you remember your Baptism? - we are remembering who we belong to.

Next Sunday 7 of our young people are being confirmed along with youngsters from Clontarf and Raheny & Coolock in Clontarf. I just want to say now that these young people have been a tremendous group to work with.

Do you remember your own confirmation? The day of taking for ourselves the promises of Baptism.

I certainly remember mine – I was not confirmed until I was 17. As it turns out our Gospel reading this morning includes the text the Bishop of Aston used in his sermon at my Confirmation in St Lawrence’s Northfield.

‘You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you.’

Or in the Message translation that we read from “You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit.’

I take two very important lessons from that. The first is that each one of you, each person in this building is special. You didn’t choose me – I chose you. Special not because we are the best runners, the best person at maths or science or Irish or geography or history, the prettiest or the most handsome- we are all special because God has placed a supreme value on each one of us, the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus – God says to each one of us – ‘You’re worth that to me.’ – the rest of my life, of your life is one of learning what that means to each one of us.

The next lesson I take is that we are put here to make a difference. ‘remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit.’ Over these weeks we’ve been thinking of the difference faith can make to us and how we live our lives. Remember when we were on the commandments. What does it mean to honour your father and your mother – we always have good discussions on that one! We thought about who Jesus was, what his cross means to us, what forgiveness means.

Then we thought of what difference can people of faith make in the world. We thought of people who had campaigned against racism and oppression, their message was rooted in their deep Christian conviction that racism and oppression was an offence before God – we thought of Martin Luther King in

America, Desmond Tutu in South Africa. In our own country, Gordon Wilson who on the day his daughter died next to him in the aftermath of an IRA bomb in Enniskillen, said he was praying for those who had planted the bomb. That came out of his own deeply held faith.

How can you or I bring something of God's love, God's desire for justice, for peace building, for reconciliation in my school, my place of work, my home, my community.

‘You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you.’

That stayed with me from the night of my Confirmation. May each one of you grow in your understanding of God's love for you and your place in his Church – and may God work in and through each one of you in what ever you do, wherever you live, whoever you marry.

May your Confirmation next Sunday night be a very special time for each one of you, one that you can look back on, as Jesus says of each one of you:

“You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit.’