RUMBLINGS FROM THE BUNKER

THE TRUMP CARD

'Keep out of politics Father!' Good advice. Advice I have always followed. Of course there's a difference between party politics and politics with a small 'p'. Politics with a small 'p' dovetails into the social teaching of the Church. This includes employment, civil rights, housing, citizenship and a whole host of other areas.

Years ago when we were small children on holidays with our cousins we often played cards. One of my memories of those late night fun card games is my Uncle Jim triumphantly slapping down, I think, the ace of spades as he laughed uproariously 'pick the bones out of that!' I remember our collective moan as Jim gleefully explained that that card beats the others, what you call your trump card.

The trump card: according to the dictionary: (in bridge, whist, and similar card games) a playing card of the suit chosen to rank above the others, which can win a trick where a card of a different suit has been led; a valuable resource that may be used, especially as a surprise, in order to gain an advantage.

In this week's rumblings I'd like to share some thoughts on the idea of the 'trump card'. There is a rapidly growing narrative based on the idea that might is right. I do something because I can. Of course there's nothing new about this. Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini all brought this notion to new heights. These instruments of evil all began their climb to power rather cleverly. At the beginning there was no spewing of hatred let alone death. In fact they wooed and seduced their own people. Key in their arsenal of persuasion, especially in the embryonic stage of their climb to power, was the use of both fear and flattery. This is a potent mix. This mix is now receiving a considerable resurgence across the world.

'Ireland for the Irish! We're full up! Would you agree Father?' So came the shout across the street only a few months ago. The same week a lady was telling me she felt a little intimidated by a group of men walking down the street. The men were speaking a language she didn't understand. They seemed to be talking angrily. I totally get that she was a little frightened but in fact they were talking excitedly because of good news received. I later introduced her to two of them, a chef and father of two, and a paediatrician and father of four.

Now for the trump card! The trump card par excellence is Jesus of Nazareth. Fear and ignorance feed suspicion and anger. This encourages us to see people who are different to us as threat. However followers of Jesus see the other as brother or sister. They represent an adventure. The stranger is potential and possibility. The Crib, the Cross and the Empty Tomb all trump the growing dangerous narrative that is fundamentally rooted in evil.

Fraternally, JoeMcD 21.09.25