

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY MONDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019

Good morning

“The clock is ticking” and “The countdown has begun”. Phrases like that take me back to the moment in 2011 when I was told I had to have a triple heart bypass.

After an angiogram on a Friday I was kept in over the weekend to be first up on the Monday. I’ll not forget the conversation with the surgeon who explained all the risks, and then asked me to sign the consent form.

There was a momentary storm in my brain thinking I could refuse.

I signed – but throughout the weekend, as the clock was ticking, I kept wondering if there was any other way.

This scenario comes to mind today because whenever I try to make sense of how a group behaves I often reduce it to how a single person might react in similar circumstances.

As a country we made a decision in 2016. Right or wrong, for better or for worse, that vote told us as a people something about our conflicts and our commonalities.

In this the first week of the final month the countdown has begun. And just as a patient who’s signed the consent form yet continues to wonder about other possible options so we as a nation stare into the future wondering if there’s any other way.

Without belittling the genuine actions of Members of Parliament, it feels to me like ever since the vote there’s been a lot of displacement activity, as if collectively we’re trying obviate the consequences of both the past and the future.

It's not so much about facing up to what we voted for, but to what that vote showed us about the nation's soul.

In his life Jesus encountered a lot of displacement activity. People who were on the verge of following him suddenly found other preoccupations.

Reaching for an agricultural metaphor he replied, "No one who puts their hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God".

This was not as glib as it may seem. He could have been speaking of and to himself. He later confessed that his own soul was like a shipwreck as he contemplated the crucifying prospect that lay ahead of him. Even so, he knew his future held many twists and turns.

Whatever happens to us this month and whichever way we voted, I imagine, that in all the compromises there'll be a little bit of dying in each one of us. But the truth is, as in the case of the aforementioned patient, the looking back will eventually give way to looking forward.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE