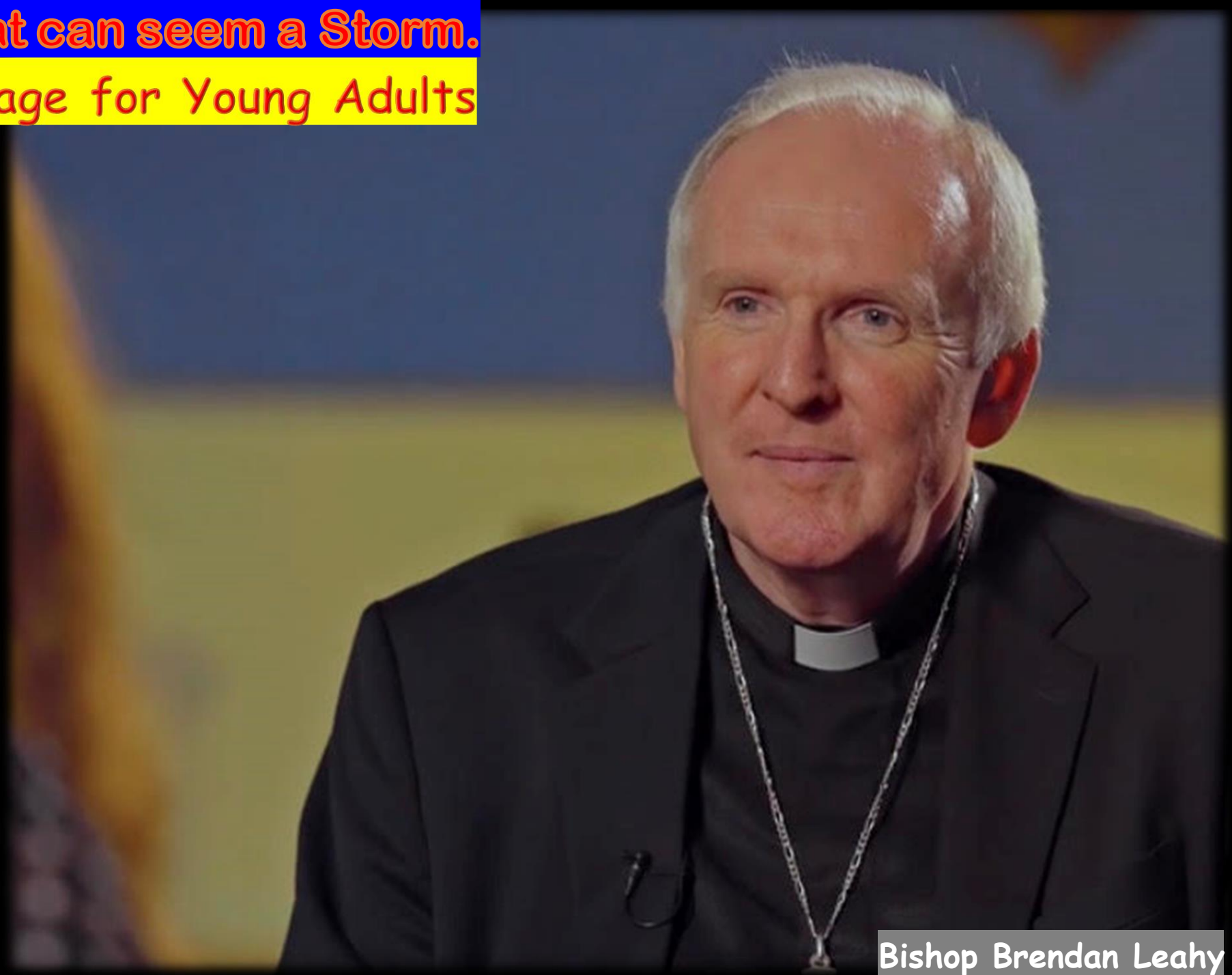


**Have Courage in what can seem a Storm.**

**A short Easter Message for Young Adults**



**Bishop Brendan Leahy**



## **DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,**

Recently, I've enjoyed a few conversations with some young adults.

Several interesting points were made

so I thought I'd share a few thoughts with you.

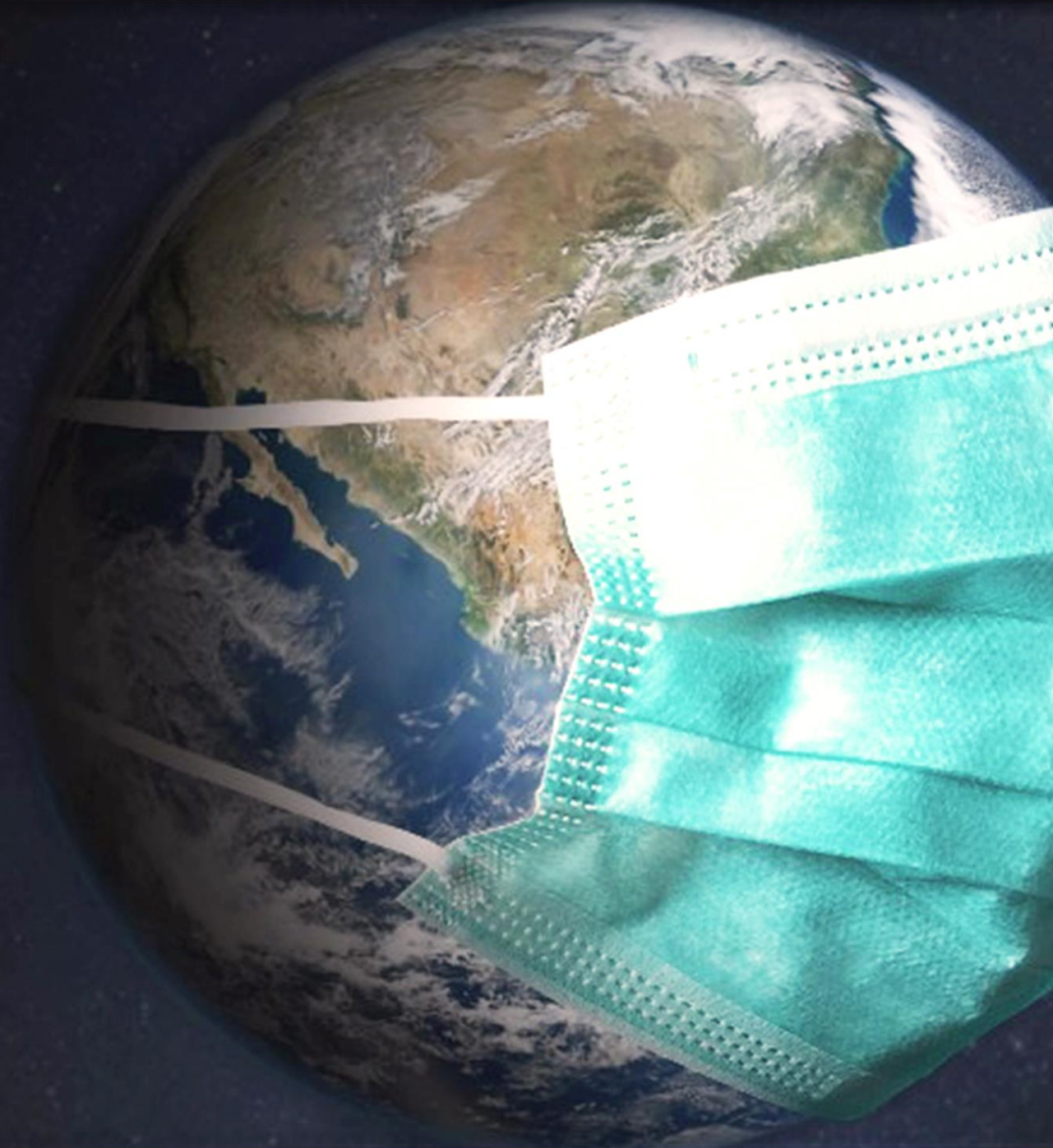
### **"COVID WASN'T ALWAYS EASY"**

Though the latest variant of Covid is still widespread there is a sense that we're coming out of the worst of it.

And yet we can't claim it's easy getting back to things.







It has been a hard and stressful  
time  
for young adults not being able  
to  
go at your own pace.  
There were so many special  
moments  
missed out on  
- school or college graduations,  
the new social opportunities  
of going to college, travelling...  
It's okay to be upset about that.  
There's no need to feel guilty  
about  
feeling bad.





## “GETTING GOING AGAIN”

Maybe Covid left us too much on our own.

But now is a time to get going again.

There's no point in waiting around. While we've all spent so much time on-line, it's important now - if we haven't already - to break out of the shell that we might have created and meet up with one another.

It's time to go 'off-line', get back in person. It's time to get back into the hurling or music or just meeting up. And it's good to have something to do in our life, sport or going to the cinema or hanging out with friends...

While the focus must now be getting going again, we need also to get the balance right, making sure we also make time for moments of reflection or meditation or personal prayer. One positive aspect of Covid is that we saw the value of slowing down, let's not lose that fully.



## “Discipline”

Perhaps during Covid, we've found we've become a little tired or perhaps even a little “lazy” or lacking in confidence with energy levels lower. Getting back to training and sports and lively inter-action with others can seem a little surreal. As one of the young adults I spoke with said, “it needs a certain discipline”. It might even be hard to catch up with friends. So, yes, discipline with ourselves but gentleness with one another, not putting pressure on one another.







## **"Being Courageous"**

**There are still a lot of things in our world that cause social anxiety. We all still have relations who are vulnerable and young people are particularly mindful of elderly relations and the need to be as safe as possible for their sake. There's the violent death of Ashling Murphy, a beautiful all-rounder young person whose death has had a deep impact on all of society, but it has engendered a fear in young women. As one young woman put it, "we should be able to walk home without fear". Sadly, there are also many negative stories of old people being attacked. For young men, there's the question of watching out for disrespectful behaviour, calling it out when noticed and not just accepting it, having the courage to say when a "joke" is not appropriate.**





And there's the courage to say no to bullying of any kind, including online bullying. It's also a very courageous move to say no to 'online' in its entirety, to social media. There's a friend of mine who says that he doesn't walk away from anything that's negative in his life, he sprints.

So, by that token, if social media is bringing negativity to your life, walk away from it. If they are true friends, they will have your Phone number! Social media is a double edge sword and the sharpest side cuts deep, as we have seen so many times with young people being overwhelmed to the point of no return from online vitriol.

The antidote to this is simple – turn it off. So have the courage to do so. If we hear something on radio that we dislike, we switch channel or turn it off.



**Young adults today also acknowledge the pervasiveness of illegal drugs and the pernicious challenge of drink – spiking, an action that seems to be quite prevalent.**

**More recently, young people’s social anxiety has increased further as they face pressures to do with the cost of living and accommodation difficulties. The desperate spectre of the war in Ukraine with refugees arriving in great numbers in Ireland has cast a gloomy shadow over us all. We imagine the plight and trauma of families, mothers and children.**





**Young adults realise young people of their age, men and women, have been called to war. We all feel threatened by how war can so easily escalate in a way we'd have never foreseen possible in Europe.**

**So, yes, there is social anxiety around, a storm, as such, for young people and it's not easy. Many young people are on the brink. But let's remember too what Helen Keller said, "While the world is full of suffering it is also full of the overcoming of suffering". It is good to share our worries and fears with others, being courageous and hopeful and striving to create a better world, trusting that we can overcome much together.**





## "BEING MORE AWARE OF PEOPLE AROUND YOU".

In one of my conversations, one of the young adults spoke of the story of the **Good Samaritan**. This Easter, it's good to remember this great parable. It's worth reading it (Lk 10:25-37). When he discovered someone beaten and half-dead alongside the road, instead of simply being a passer-by, the **Good Samaritan** made himself a neighbour to that person, and did something to help. This parable tells us two things.





First it describes Jesus himself who found humanity divided and anxious and crying out for help. Jesus made himself a neighbour to us. He took on even our faults and failures, praying to God the Father for us and laying down his life out of love for us. And he rose out of death. So we are never alone and we can always call on Jesus to help us overcome worries and fears.

"Cast all your anxieties and burdens onto God" is the advice St. Peter gives in one of his letters.





But this parable also provides us with a message: don't just be a passer-by in life, make yourself a neighbour to those around you. Be more aware of the people around you. Where we see someone in need or in fear or in anxiety - whether it be on some practical issue or simply needing friendship in our college or workplace - be the first to love, to reach out, to offer a helping hand. Using our head, our heart and our hands, we can, as Gandhi put it, be the change we want to bring about in our world.







## **"Trusting in the Lord - A Golfing Witness!"**

To conclude, if we need witness to the calm that the Lord can bring to our lives when we become overwhelmed, we need look no further than Scottie Scheffler, who donned the famous green jacket after winning the US Masters recently. The day after winning he spoke about being almost overwhelmed the morning of the final round, breaking down in tears, talking about not being ready 'for this'. Like so many of us he turned to an ally for support, his wife Meredith who asked, 'who are you to say you are not ready?'



then talked about God's will. 'God is in control and the Lord is leading me. And if today is my time, then it's my time.'

With that faith and conviction in his faith, it's no small wonder that Scottie Scheffler played such a composed round of golf.

Yes, peace and calm can come in troubled waters if we trust in the Lord!







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RISEN