

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 29th November 2013

'Now, I'll tell you something,
I think you'll understand.'

50 years ago today one of the greatest pop songs of all time was released by the most successful pop band of them all.

On 29th November 1963 'I Want to Hold Your Hand' was released by The Beatles. This two and half minutes of perfect pop spent five weeks at Number One in the UK. It was the Beatle's first American number one and became the band's best-selling single worldwide.

When my children were very young, just starting to walk for the first time they instinctively wanted to hold their Daddy's hand. I remember the warmth of their chubby little fingers in my big protective hand. It seems to be the most natural thing in the world for a young child to want to hold your hand.

In the book 'All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten' Robert Fulghum writes about all the wisdom for life that we learn at nursery school. This includes:

'Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody and

When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic,

hold hands and stick together.'

If we lived this way as adults the world would be a very different place.

In this part of the world we often hear more about the hands that will never be held. But let me tell you about what I see every day.

I see carers quietly holding the hands of those who are ill and frail and lonely.

I see youth workers holding the hands of young people whose self-confidence has been knocked.

I see counselors and befrienders holding the hands of grief stricken families bereaved through suicide.

I see fundraisers doing crazy stunts to hold the hands of people on the other side of the world coping with the aftermath of a terrible typhoon.

I see ordinary people breaking down barriers that have divided them from their neighbours for years, working together for the common good in a way that says 'I want to hold your hand'.

The book of Isaiah says:

'For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.'

I don't know about you but when I reflect on compassionate people and a loving God who want to hold my hand when life is tough 'I feel happy inside, it's such a feeling that my love, I can't hide, I can't hide, I can't hide'.