

**BBC RADIO ULSTER**

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

**Friday 8th June 2012**

It's been a 'Once in a Lifetime' kind of week hasn't it?

First there was the Diamond Jubilee, an historic occasion that won't be repeated in our lifetimes.

Then we had the arrival of the Olympic Torch. A once in a lifetime opportunity for most of those who carried the torch, and also for the thousands of people who gathered to catch a glimpse of the Olympic flame.

Then as if all this excitement wasn't enough we were treated to the transit of Venus across the Sun. No human being will have the opportunity to watch that tiny globe cross the face of the fiery giant again until the year 2117.

Some things only happen once in a lifetime. And usually we turn out in huge numbers to be a part or to catch a glimpse. We only get one chance. One shot.

It's got me thinking about the other 'once in a lifetime' opportunities that come our way.

Today might be a once in a lifetime opportunity to make contact and begin to heal a broken relationship with a friend or an estranged relative.

We may only get one more chance to say 'sorry' or 'thank you' or 'I forgive you'.

I believe this generation of people in Northern Ireland now has a once in a lifetime opportunity to try to deal with the conflict and pain of the past. But we're struggling.

This week the identity of just one out of the 25 members of the Forum for Victims and Survivors was publicised in a way that was obviously going to create further controversy and more hurt.

These are very difficult and sensitive issues. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to deal with the needs of victims and survivors of the Troubles.

Are we really going to allow every attempt to deal with the past be turned into a tragic and bitter public row that helps no one? I believe this community is better than that.

Moving on to global issues, today is World Oceans Day. It's a day for highlighting the fact that our oceans are in trouble. Climate change has already been linked to the killing of coral reefs and fishing practices have resulted in a dramatic decline in many types of fish and sea life we depend on.

When it comes to the environment this generation has a once in a lifetime opportunity to protect and save our oceans for future generations.

We hope future generations will see the next Diamond Jubilee, the next Olympic torch visit and the next transit of Venus across the Sun.

There's a wise Chinese proverb worth contemplating in relation to all of this.

It says: 'If you want happiness for a lifetime - help the next generation.'