

**BBC RADIO ULSTER**

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

**Friday 23rd May 2014**

We are living in the era of the selfie.

In 2013 "selfie" was announced as "word of the year" by the Oxford English Dictionary, with the definition: A selfie is a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website.

The celebrity selfie taken by Ellen DeGeneres while hosting the Oscars this year, was the most retweeted image ever and has taken selfie mania to a whole new level.

A telling sign of the saturation of the selfie, came this week when the Electoral Commission told staff at polling stations they should stop people taking selfies while casting their vote.

The fear was that the sacred secrecy of the ballot box was under threat.

As one electoral officer said:

"We have told staff that if they see anyone taking a photograph they should ask the person to delete it but not to try to wrestle the phone out of their hands."

Yes, this was week when the selfie threatened to undermine democracy itself!

My favourite is a selfie taken by an astronaut. It puts everything in perspective when you realise that a picture taken by an astronaut, with the earth in the background, is basically a photograph of every one of us.

Of course some people hate selfies and see the craze as a symbol of the narcissism of a superficial and self obsessed generation.

I don't get too worked up about pictures of people smiling, but maybe the selfie haters have a point.

On a recent family outing to Donegal, the weather was so wonderful and the scenery was so stunning I simply had to take a selfie of us with the sea and the mountains in the background. This photograph will always prompt happy memories, but I did wonder if maybe I could have spent more time simply breathing in the beauty of the moment rather than feeling the need to take a picture of it, with my big nose in the foreground!

And that's got me thinking. Cutting back on selfies is one thing. But what about cutting back on my self-indulgence, or my self-satisfaction or my self-righteousness.

It's a big challenge to

'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.'

If I turn the focus away from myself for just a minute, I might notice and help someone else who's struggling with low self-esteem or poor self worth.

If I can support someone to see that they are valued.

To accept that 'the very hairs of their head are numbered'

That might help create a smile of hope and joy worth capturing in a selfie forever.