



**Reflection 12th Week of the Year 21 / 22 June
by Mgr Daniel McHugh**

Do Not Be Afraid

As I watch the News in these days, it is clear that we live in what I would call a “disturbed world”: we can point to many different happenings here at home and abroad that are unsettling! Just as we seemed to be overcoming, or at least learning to live with the Corona Virus, we have had the shocking pictures of the terrible death of George Floyd in the United States. In it’s wake, we can see the country we live in being rocked by the questioning of our values and way of life. Even our iconic wartime leader, Winston Churchill, is drawn into the discussion about racism and the role of slavery, and his memorial in Parliament Square was defaced by demonstrators.

In this respect, I found an interview with his niece, one of the Soames family, very helpful. She said “he had feet of clay, but he was also a great leader at a critical time in our history and that is why we honour him.” It was her recognition of his weaknesses that was so important; she didn’t deny he had racist attitudes (that is something we have only come to realise is unacceptable in these days) but he had indeed been crucial in the defeat of a Nazi/Fascist regime.

We do indeed need to look at ourselves in so many different ways and repent of what is wrong, but we also need to speak for what is good and true with courage.

On Friday, 19 June, we celebrated the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: it is now the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests, and I visited the Shrine of the Sacred Heart at Maryvale, now that we can visit Churches and Chapels once more for Prayer.

I was watching one of the Maryvale streamed Novena Masses leading up to the Solemnity. This was the Mass celebrated by Monsignor Timothy Menezes at St Chad’s Cathedral. He spoke of Maryvale and its role in the Diocese, picking up on the fact that St John Henry Newman had lived there. This is an excerpt:

“The connections between Maryvale and the life of St John Henry Newman are very strong. Newman spoke of wanting an educated laity, and I would like to take this opportunity this evening to invite you, the People of God, to say ‘Yes’ to taking the next stage on your journey of faith.... Maryvale’s greatest work is the nourishing of Faith of adults. Please take the time to find out about Maryvale and it’s possibilities”

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



When we began the Institute of Adult Education at Maryvale in 1980, one of our principal aims was to - as St Paul says, to empower people “to give reason for the Faith that is in you”. And, when Jesus says “Do not be afraid ... If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in Heaven,” one of the most important resources in our armoury in these days is knowing our Faith; the other is being close to the Heart of Jesus. Maryvale brings these two together.

We are blessed to have many wonderful mentors/guides in standing for the Faith in our land. Two of the most famous have their Feast on Monday 22 June, St John Fisher and St Thomas More. At a time, when many went with the flow and abandoned the Catholic Church, they stood up for unity of the Church around the successor of St Peter. Of Fisher, St Thomas More wrote: “I reckon in this realm, no one man, in wisdom, learning, and long approved virtue together need to be matched and compared with him.” Of Thomas More, his friend Erasmus wrote “No one is less led by the opinions of the crowd, yet no one departs less from common sense.”

In 1535 they shed their Blood for Jesus Christ at the time when secular powers were moving against the authority of Peter in the matter of Church teaching on Marriage.

If we are to witness to the world our values, our belief in the Way of Jesus, we all need first to recognise our own frailty. Every member of the Church must hear that call, that we may play our part, as a Community, in building a more just, a more forgiving and loving world, one that is less disturbed, more at peace individually and with each other, one where racist attitudes are challenged, not hidden. There are more unsettling times to come! Do not be afraid!

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Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese