



Reflection 18th Week of the Year 2/3 August 2020 by Mgr Daniel McHugh

Nothing can come between us and the Love of Christ

When you go out to shop just now, first of all you need to take your mask with you and put it on before you go in! Then you have to stand back and survey the scene: what way do I go in and how do I come out? What way are the arrows going? It can be a bit of a nightmare!

Then, some people used to say they came to Church for a short time of peace and communion with the Lord. Now, you have to work out carefully “how do I go in and come out? Where is my mask? Have I got to sanitize my hands? Is it 2 metres or 1 plus?” And for some of my age “What is a metre anyway?”

But, we are glad to be back! The wonderful words of St Paul in today’s second reading are particularly appropriate: “Nothing can come between us and the Love of Christ.” We are here again after more than 3 months to hear his Word and to be fed with the Holy Eucharist.

As it happens, it is the first Sunday Mass with people physically present that I have been able to preside at (I have been doing it remotely, streaming online, as they say). And how fortunate, I am to have the readings for today’s Mass, the 18th Sunday. First of all, we have those words of St Paul that I have first mentioned: “Nothing can come between us and the Love of Christ.” Then, we have the first line of the Psalm “The Lord is kind and full of compassion”, and then “the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and the fish in the Gospel”. For me, all of these come together: the word “compassion” is powerful, it is much more than, for example, the word “pity”. My old Oxford English Dictionary describes it as “pity inclining one to help”. It seems to me, the Apostles pitied the crowd and wanted to send them off to find food elsewhere; Jesus says “how much food have you got - 5 loaves and a fish - let them sit down, share it with them.”

This parable comes after the news reached Jesus of the death of St John the Baptist, the beheading of John by Herod. And it follows on the parables we have been reading about the Kingdom of God. The other Sunday we heard the Kingdom compared to a mustard seed, so small, yet growing into a great bush, where the birds can rest and shelter.

It seems to me the miracle in today’s Gospel is an encouragement to us to give the little we have to building the Kingdom and Jesus will do the rest. That is precisely what happened. The Apostles gave what they had, Jesus worked the miracle out of His compassion.

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



When I have been asked to take on a new mission by the Bishop and said yes: starting at Holy Souls, Acocks Green in 1968; setting up the West Indian Chaplaincy 1974; becoming Director of Religious Education and Catechetics and founding Maryvale Institute of Adult Education in 1980; starting the Diocesan Office for Regeneration and becoming Parish Priest in Dorridge 2001; retiring as Parish Priest and becoming Co-ordinator of Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Diocese in 2018; I have always gone to Our Lady to ask her prayers and guidance as I have made my commitment to give the little I have and leave the rest to the Lord Jesus who walks with me, and gives growth to my efforts.

I signalled the importance of Our Lady's prayers, the woman who said "yes" to God, when I dedicated the Website of the Ethnic Chaplaincies, Eparchies and Missions to Our Lady of Good Counsel: it seems to me she is a wonderful model for us.

The woman who said "yes" to becoming the mother of Jesus in a most strange situation, "a Virgin how can that be". A woman of trust in God; a woman who walked the way of Jesus right to the Cross. And, the woman who in many Apparitions has shown her closeness to us and her maternal care for us. She is indeed deserving of the title "Our Lady of Good Counsel", one of the titles in the Litany of Loreto, and the name of the Church and fresco named after her at a place called Genazzano, about 25 miles from Rome. Behind that is a wonderful story of a woman who in the 15th Century set out to repair a Church in ruins, dedicated in her name. An example of giving what we have and leaving the rest to God.

In this Holy Eucharist, anticipated in the miracle of the loaves and the fish, we are strengthened for the journey, and promised the means to bring our particular call as a parent, grandparent, young person, single adult, to a Blessed conclusion.

"Nothing can come between us and the Love of Christ."

30 July 2020

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese