



17<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time: 25<sup>th</sup> /26<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

**“You open wide your hands O Lord, and grant our desires”**

Not everyone is on Facebook, but I am glad I am! It keeps me in touch with families, school, and parish at this special time of year: holidays are here; children are leaving Primary now to go on to Secondary after the Summer; and in the Facebook Family, a group focusing on the Foodbank and support for those in need, things slows down a bit. So there are holiday pics, pictures of children on their first day at school alongside ones of them as they are now (much more grown up); and a picture with a car boot full of bags of food and household goods ready to go off to the Foodbank and those who are having a hard time due to the work situation.

When you think of the Gospel for the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year, and the compassion Jesus has on those who are going hungry, feeding them from the loaves and the fish brought along by a small boy, and then you think of the activity of the “Foodbank Group”, as I call it, you know His work continues through His disciples today. Yes, Jesus in the miracle of the loaves and the fish, uses the small amount the boy has to feed the many. One of the “organisers” in the group posted this:

Many thanks to our wonderfully generous local community~ including Balsall Common, St George & St Teresa Catholic Primary School & the Mini Vinnies, Morrison’s Solihull ,Tesco’s Balsall Common as well as the Knowle & Dorridge Round Table, K & D Lions, & Balsall Common Lions for all your wonderful support ❤️❤️❤️❤️

☀️We are now going to suspend our porch collections for the duration of the summer break. An announcement will be made in September when we recommence.☀️

We will continue to support those local families within our local area that we are currently supporting, throughout the Summer break!!

☀️☀️Hope everyone’s plans for the summer come to fruition & that we return in September refreshed & ready to go again ☀️☀️

A while ago, the local MP asked me about the work of the Church in the Community and I pointed to this Foodbank Group. Perhaps some of them, like the boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish, don’t think they have a lot to give in such a vast crowd of people in need, but the “team effort”, with Church members at the heart of it, makes a real difference.

**Monsignor Daniel McHugh**

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese

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I am sure, that what is happening in Dorridge (Solihull) and surrounding area, is replicated across the Diocese. No one can say anymore “the Church is only focused on pie in the sky”. Jesus himself was first of all concerned for the hungry and the sick, though, as you will see in the Gospel next weekend, he goes on to speak of the spiritual needs that He also came to satisfy. Jesus came for the whole person: that is the message of the readings on these Sundays, and the Church does too, as His presence in the world today.

Joseph Pollard in his book of Homilies links hunger and disease to sin, quoting the Catechism where it says sin “causes all forms of human bondage” and every form of bondage lessens our humanity. In these days of the Pandemic, Global Warming and serious climate issues, we are perhaps more conscious than ever of the link between sin - selfishness, exploitation, abuse of power – and self destruction, poverty, disease and hunger around us. Yes, Jesus came to overcome sin, to do battle with Satan, and to show us the way to life. Next week in the gospel, he will lead us on to think of Him as the “Bread of Life” and He will say “Do not work for food that cannot last.”

The holiday period gives us the opportunity to step back, to rest, as Jesus did, and reflect on our priorities. We are called to bear witness to the needs of the whole person, body and soul. In the great Saints of the Church, like St Bridget of Sweden, Patroness of Europe, whose Feast is this Friday 23 July (my Podcast for the week), and St Charbel of Lebanon, Saturday 24 July, we have real people who lived out their Faith in the world of their time, and will provide pointers and spiritual support to us as we seek to be the presence of Jesus in the World of our day.  
ur lives and the lives of others.

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