



31<sup>st</sup> Week of the Year: 31<sup>st</sup> October/1<sup>st</sup> November

All Saints and All Souls

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

**“Whoever comes to me I shall not turn him away.”**

On 16<sup>th</sup> October we celebrated our Catholic Community, one in Christ, while being of many cultures and races – it was the Annual Intercultural Celebration at the heart of which is the Eucharist. A friend who is not a Catholic followed it on webcam: she sent a message on WhatsApp congratulating the Ethnic Chaplaincies, Eparchies and Missions. Coming from outside the Church she said “what you are achieving now is just what the world needs. I trust you really felt acknowledged and appreciated.” Of course she saw a very colourful ceremony, people of many languages, colours and cultures celebrating their unity in Christ. In a world of much conflict and division this Mass gives hope.

One of the highlights was a young girl Marriet aged 8 reciting the Our Father in Aramaic, the language of Jesus Himself. We don’t usually break out into applause during Mass, but that is what happened. The Congregation was moved emotionally by this experience of unity.

Something similar happened in Coventry Cathedral yesterday when the huge puppet of Amal arrives. She represents an abandoned refugee child from Syria in search of her mother. The Procession of “little Amal” (3.5 meters high) started in Turkey and has gone across Europe and will end in Manchester. On the way, the Pope went out to welcome her in Rome: the headline was “Little Amal made a friend in Rome.” Cardinal Nichols welcomed her in Westminster Cathedral and Tweeted “the refugee puppet highlights the plight of these children fleeing war and persecution in search of their mothers...it is our duty to care; our duty to think and pray.”

There are moments when we stop and reflect and are moved to consider the direction we are taking and acknowledge the good things that are happening around us. One such is the Feast of All Saints in the Church Year. It is meant to call to mind the many Saints who are not acknowledged in the Calendar of Saints, the goodness in the world around us. The joy and hope brought to our lives by the goodness of children is what comes to mind! You will remember the words of Our Lord (which I often read at Baptism) “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them. It is to such of these that the Kingdom of God belongs.” You will understand then why I think of Marriet and the refugee children of Syria. I think of others too on the Day of All Saints, in particular the good parishioners Priests know, who are dedicated to the Church and live out their Faith in daily Mass and generous works for charity. I cannot forget either the Catholic Christian witness of Sir David Amess MP who was cruelly stabbed to death recently while doing his duty to his constituents, surely an example of living public service, sadly denied Extreme Unction (the Sacrament of the Sick) in his dying moments by those who thought it was their duty in order not to contaminate the crime scene.

**Monsignor Daniel McHugh**

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese

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On the occasion of All Saints many of us will be thinking of our loved ones who strove to live out the Gospel of the Beatitudes for this Solemnity. The All Saints Celebration is followed by All Souls 2<sup>nd</sup> November (the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed) many of us will go to the graves of loved ones during November, popularly known as the Month of Holy Souls. We will give thanks for their love and care for us, and we will pray for them to be in full communion around the Throne of the Lamb of God in glory. As I reflected on this Feast which I wanted to illustrate in a picture for our Burning Bush VLOG, I found a lovely picture – candles lit around Crosses with a young girl lighting a candle – which you will find posted on Our Lady of Good Counsel Ethnic Chaplaincies Website. Candles lit in this manner fill us with hope in life to come. For those who believe the words of Our Lord, these are his words in the Gospel for All Souls: “Yes it is my Father’s will that whoever sees the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and that I shall raise him up on the last day.”

Yes, as we celebrate All Saints and All Souls we enter a month full of Hope as we prepare to celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King remembering those words of Jesus: “whoever comes to me I shall not turn him away.” Taken from the Gospel for All Souls. He is Savior of all peoples, all nations find unity in Him.

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