



Eighth Week of Ordinary Time: 27th/28th February 2022

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

“A man’s words flow out from what fills his heart.”

As I write this Reflection, I have just sent a message of Solidarity in Prayer for Justice and Peace to Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Community here in the U.K. Earlier this morning (24th February) Russia declared war on Ukraine. I thought of the words I had chosen for this Reflection taken from the Gospel of the Eighth Sunday “a man’s words flow out from what fills his heart” as I thought of the words in the declaration of war earlier this morning. My words to Bishop Nowakowski were especially in my heart as a result of being welcomed by the Ukrainian Catholic Church to Lviv in Ukraine, and then in Kiev, back in 1995, when there was a new dawn at the end of the Soviet era and especially a new freedom for the Church. At Maryvale Institute we were able to offer our distance learning resources in Theology and Catechetics to people who were restricted by life in an “underground” church up to that time. It is a different era now, but who knows what impact there will be on the lives and freedoms of people in Ukraine, loved ones of the Ukraine diaspora here. I told Bishop Kenneth I would ask the Ethnic Chaplaincies, Eparchies and Missions (a number of whom have difficult situations in Church freedom and peace at home) to be in solidarity in Prayer for Peace and Justice.

This week we had the beautiful Feast of the Chair of St Peter. A Feast that leads us to think of Peter, and his successor today Francis, as the rock on which the Church is built, and especially the teacher to whom we look particularly in times of stress.

The chair is the symbol of teaching with authority. It was Peter who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah and Peter who told the elders of the Church that they must be an example for the whole flock to follow. Francis who teaches from the Chair of Peter today has been a wonderful guide in the recent Pandemic, speaking from the heart, being an example of Faith and Prayer as he walked the streets of Rome with the Crucifix the symbol of hope amid suffering. I am sure he will teach us once more from the heart in this crisis both in words and deeds.

This weekend we have a Pastoral letter from Archbishop Bernard which will be read in all Churches and Chapels of the Diocese. This Reflection is intended for the VLOG, Burning Bush, a 10-minute pause for thought and prayer with video. The pictures chosen are impacted on by the Feast of the Chair of Peter; I have chosen the famous statue of Peter sitting on the Chair in St Peter’s Basilica where the foot is worn away with the kisses of veneration by so many pilgrims, and a picture of Peter sinking beneath the waves as he fears he may drown; Jesus reaches out to save. They seem to me to highlight the strength and the guidance Peter, and his successors give, for our Journey of Faith. Above all they lead us in their teaching and example of Faith to Jesus, the Risen

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

Ethnic Chaplaincies

Lord. Jesus says in the Gospel for this Sunday “the disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher”.

Let us examine our way of life and the words that come from our hearts in the light of these words. Jesus is our supreme teacher and leader; those with responsibility for guiding the Church, especially our Pope and Bishops, look to Him to interpret the signs of the times.

Saint Polycarp whose memorial was celebrated this week, is an early Bishop and Martyr from present day Izmir in Turkey, formerly Smyrna. He could have saved his life by denying Jesus. He famously said at the age of 86 “how can I renounce the King who has saved me?”. “A man’s words flow out from what fills his heart.”

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