



Ethnic Chaplaincies: Welcoming Hong Kongers

Family Afternoon, 26th June 2022

Podcast: Family and the Catholic Faith

Reflection at Time of Prayer

Today's Family Afternoon has grown out of my concern for you Catholic Families from Hong Kong: that in your new environment you may be strengthened in Faith so as to live it more deeply and pass it onto your children.

As you know, I have been aware that children are not getting into Catholic Schools and therefore are not getting the Catechesis/religious education they need. Parishes generally have parish-based instruction but that is usually limited to the time of Baptism, First Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation. So, I have turned to your Family Life and how Faith can be nurtured there: for your own sake and your children too.

We are blessed that a gathering called "World Meeting of Families" has been taking place in Rome this last week, and Lianne Pap who came here (to St George and St Teresa) about 4 years ago to help the Parish prepare for the last one, which was in Dublin, has been able to come to join us to assist in our Reflection.

The theme for World Meeting of Families was "Family Love: a Vocation and Path to Holiness." The Church's way of looking at Marriage and Family is very different from the wider society in which we live. Pope Francis highlighted this in the closing ceremonies saying: "By accepting the call to Marriage and family couples set out on a journey without knowing beforehand where exactly it would lead, and what new situations, unexpected events and surprises, would eventually lie in store."

You, who were married back home in Hong Kong, might well say to me "How true!" This morning I was listening on the Radio to the fact that this week marks 25 years since Hong Kong was united to mainland China. There could hardly have been more "unexpected events" than what has happened since – especially politically! And, then in your family life, I am sure every child born, every parent dying, every change of job, not even mentioning coming to another country, has brought new challenges!

The Holy Father, Francis, praised married couples courageous decision "to use your freedom not for yourselves but to love the person that God has put at your side." What a Vocation!

In his closing Homily he said: "The family is the place where we learn to love...Today more than ever we feel compelled to defend it." Why? Because the vision of the world is so different: it is only too ready to drown out the way of Jesus, to lead us into a way of self, the consumer society.

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



The Pope encouraged parents to discover their Vocation and discover the great Mission God has in mind for them. This is not realised in one Afternoon or even a series of Afternoons; it means parents helping their children discover their Vocation too: and that is not just about getting the best grades at school, important as that is.

The Pope at the end of the Festival in Rome sent out the Parents on a Mission to Sanctify Family Life. Not that he didn't realise the messiness of family life: about 5 families spoke at the beginning of this Festival in Rome and they were not all perfect. One spoke openly of living together and coming later to the realisation of having Christ walking with them in the Sacrament of Marriage. Another from Ukraine (just a mother and daughter) spoke of leaving everything and having to flee; the host family spoke too.

For us, Christ is our rock: today let us ask Him to walk with us. There is so much to share here as to how to do that: I entitled our Service: "In the Eucharist the Heart of Jesus beats for us still" and the readings highlight this.

It is in our weekly Mass that we will touch base with Him, listen to His Word and Reflect on it and be nourished by it. I placed the Sacred Heart in this Church of St George and St Teresa to remind us of this. Another thing I did was to place the Bell at the top of the Church to ring at 12 noon and at 6pm - the focus is prayer punctuating our day. We can do no better than turn to Mary as we, like her "ponder all those things in our hearts". That is what the Angelus Prayer helps us do each day!

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