



6th Week of Easter 14<sup>th</sup> May 2023 – Reflection by Mgr Daniel McHugh

***“He will send you another Advocate to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth”.***

As I write this Reflection I am conscious of the debate that took place in the House of Lords yesterday and in particular the contribution from the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was on a subject that causes much division including within the Churches: immigration. The focus was on sending illegal immigrants to Rwanda. The Archbishop pointed to an important truth: that we shouldn't be solving our problems on the backs of poorer nations. I mention this in the light of the words of Albert Schweitzer *“let us rejoice in the Truth, wherever we find its lamp burning”*. We are at an important point in the policy making and I would like to see the Archbishop's words of truth being taken note of. There are many who will not listen to truth as Jesus says in the Gospel for this Sunday *“I shall ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him”*. The popular Proverb comes to mind in this situation: *“Tell the truth and run”*. I suspect the Archbishop will stand by the Truth he has spoken, but many are reluctant to speak the truth in many situations because of the reaction it can receive.

We are at an important point in the Church's year: in the coming week we celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord and in a further 10 days we celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit who Jesus speaks of as *“another Advocate”* and the *“Spirit of Truth”*, who will reveal the inner life of Father, Son and Spirit, and indeed the Spirit living in each of us. On the Solemnity of the Ascension (a Holy Day of Obligation) we are reminded that Jesus hands on His mission to the Disciples on the mountain where He arranged to meet them: *“Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit .... And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time”*.

We are being reminded of our sharing this mission in these days when we speak of the Synodal Church, I am particularly attracted to the words of St Peter in the second Reading for the Sixth Sunday of Easter *“Reverence the Lord Jesus in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have. But, give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience.”* We need to keep abreast of the Truth paused on in the Church's Teaching and that is a vital in a world where we hear so many voices – all proclaiming they have the Truth. Perhaps these words of St John Henry Newman are worth remembering *“No Truth can really exist external to Christianity”*, though this needs to be understood in a world where the

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Catholic Church itself recognises the Truth that can be found beyond the Catholic Christian Faith. The words of St Paul in the letter to the Ephesians which are read on the Solemnity of the Ascension begin: *"May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him"*.

We thank God for the teaching Church which we celebrate at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit that is the love between Father and Son: the Spirit that blows wherever it will, especially where we see love. This morning I read this post about Franz Kafka from a German speaking, Czech Jewish family in Prague. He did not consider fame important, but his fame rose rapidly after his death:

*At 40, Franz Kafka (1883-1924), who never married and had no children, was walking through a park one day in Berlin when he met a girl who was crying because she had lost her favourite doll. She and Kafka searched for the doll unsuccessfully.*

*Kafka told her to meet him there the next day and they would come back to look for her.*

*The next day, when they had not yet found the doll, Kafka gave the girl a letter "written" by the doll saying "please don't cry. I took a trip to see the world. I will write to you about my adventures."*

*Thus began a story which continued until the end of Kafka's life.*

*During their meetings, Kafka read the letters of the doll carefully written with adventures and conversations that the girl found adorable.*

*Finally, Kafka brought back the doll (he bought one) that had returned to Berlin.*

*"It doesn't look like my doll at all," said the girl.*

*Kafka handed her another letter in which the doll wrote: "my travels have changed me." The little girl hugged the new doll and brought the doll with her to her happy home.*

*A year later Kafka died.*

*Many years later, the now-adult girl found a letter inside the doll. In the tiny letter signed by Kafka it was written:*

*"Everything you love will probably be lost, but in the end, love will return in another way."*

*Embrace change. It's inevitable for growth. Together we can shift pain into wonder and love, but it is up to us to consciously and intentionally create that connection.*

*[Read, Love and Learn]*

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