



Sixth Week of Ordinary Time: 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

**“A kingdom that is not of this world.”**

I was in the Lake District last week and while enjoying the beautiful scenery – the lakes and the hills - I managed to get some walks despite the rain, high winds, and hailstones. I was fortunate to be able to visit some of the historic Churches that cover the area. One of the most thought provoking was Cartmel Priory, a place of Pilgrimage for over 800 years, a place where the local people treasure the Martyrs who resisted the closure of the Augustinian Monastery in 1536. Four Canons and ten husbandmen were hanged on a charge of Treason in 1537. The Monastery founded in 1189 was destroyed but part of the Priory Church together with the “Parish” section of it have been preserved. It is noteworthy that here we have a story of the people standing with the Augustinians against the King at the time, and down to today, though the Priory is in the hands of the Church of England, there is clear admiration for the Martyrs.

A significant sculpture called the “young Martyr” by Josefina de Vasconcellos stands next to the Pulpit. She gifted it to the Priory before she died in 2005. It is dedicated to the Martyrs and highlights the importance of witness to the way of Jesus that is central to the Readings of the Sixth Sunday of the Year, in which the Gospel is called the Sermon on the Plain from St Luke. The theme of the Readings can be summed up in the words of Jesus to Pilate “mine is a Kingdom that is not of this world”. A phrase from the Gospel that strikes me particularly is “Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man.” Jesus goes on “Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the Prophets”. The Martyrs at Cartmel stood up for what they believed in, their rights to live in their Monastery (the land was gifted to Iona in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century) and keep the corn from the old monastic tithe barn when the King’s officers attempted to take it over.

This Sixth Sunday comes in the 2 weeks that the Chinese people celebrate the Lunar New Year and Hong Kong people in Solihull are having a Service of Prayer giving thanks to the Lord of all Creation, for its wonder and beauty. We are having a voluntary Collection for Aid to the Church in Need because in many parts of the world people – not just Christians – are unjustly persecuted and oppressed for their beliefs and their rights are not respected.

Preparing for the Lunar New Year Service, my mind goes to the wonderful programme recently on BBC World Service “Heart and Soul, the Right Thing” where a young Hong Kong man, Joshua Wong, is interviewed about “Standing up to a Superpower”. His Christian Faith, especially his belief in justice has led to his speaking out against the authorities and to imprisonment in recent times in Hong Kong.

**Monsignor Daniel McHugh**

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese

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The way of Jesus, the way to a Kingdom that is not of this world, is our focus for Reflection this Sixth Week of the Year. The Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah is the first of the Sunday Readings and has these inspiring words:

*“A blessing on the man who has placed his trust in the Lord – he is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream”. On the other hand, “The man who relies on flesh, who’s heart turns from the Lord, he is like dry scrub in the wastelands”.*

Strangely as I was driving back from the Lakes, listening to Classic FM – there was a piece about a new composition of the Lord of the Dance which many of us might remember as a favorite Hymn at School Assemblies. The origin of that Hymn is to be found in the Gospel of the Sixth Sunday which I have quoted. If we suffer for doing right, for following the way of Jesus, “Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy”.

We are being challenged this week to examine our present situation in the context of our ultimate horizon, the Kingdom that is not of this world. May we be inspired by Prophets in past times and in our day, and as Jerimiah says “never cease to bear fruit”.

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