



25th Week of Ordinary Time and Home Mission Sunday: 18th/19th September
Reflection/Homily by Mgr Daniel McHugh

“He wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth”

More than once in these past days the picture of our late Queen Elizabeth II sitting alone in prayer, wearing the obligatory COVID face mask at the memorial service for her husband the Duke of Edinburgh, has been shown on T.V. The Queen is reported as saying “Grief is the price you pay for love”. How true that is as we all know from personal experience: I thought of those words as I visited the graves of my Mum and Dad yesterday on 14th September, the sixth anniversary of my Mum’s death. And, I am reminded of them again today 15th September the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows (Madonna Adolorata in Italian) which is aptly portrayed in the famous Sculpture in St Peter’s in Rome, the Pieta, where Mary holds her Son Jesus in her arms when He is taken down from the Cross. Often we turn to Mary in Prayer at moments of personal grief, and grief as a Church when our Church Community suffers, as was the case when the Feast originated in the 1800s.

There has been a focus on family grief in the days leading up to the Queen’s Funeral, but also on her public role: particularly her devotion to duty and public service, especially in the cause of peace. The latter was highlighted in the memorial to honour her at Hillsborough in the North of Ireland. Her role in the Reconciliation Process in Ireland was spoken of and witnessed to by the presence of the Irish Taoiseach and President, sitting alongside our Prime Minister in a Service that was very much one of Thanksgiving for the life of Queen Elizabeth, together with support for King Charles III in carrying forward his Mother’s wonderful legacy.

I have been very aware of the words of St Paul in the reading from I Timothy (2:1-8) for the 25th Sunday of the Year where he says “there should be prayers offered for everyone – petitions, intercessions and thanksgiving – and especially for Kings and others in authority, so that they may be able to live religious and reverent lives in peace and quiet.” At the Ethnic Community Services – Syro Malabar and Hong Kong – I have attended this week there have been prayers for the deceased Queen and our new King. And, I have been able to post a lovely picture and prayer for Queen Elizabeth II on our website from the Melkite Church in London.

Earlier this week I heard Eamon Holmes, the well-known broadcaster, who is originally from the Republican part of Belfast, being interviewed and he spoke of his surprise when attending Mass in London years ago and hearing us pray for the Royal Family. Times have changed in Northern Ireland too, but it is good to recall how important a Royal leader is in bringing about change. Hence the importance of the prayer St Paul speaks of for our leaders.

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



At this time we are conscious of the leadership being given by Pope Francis as he is undertaking an arduous Apostolic Journey to Kazakhstan to gather with Faith leaders in the quest for Peace and Dialogue among all nations. Mongolia's Cardinal Marengo, who comes from the same Episcopal Conference in that region, said in an interview emphasising the importance of the Pope's visit to Central Asia, that it will draw attention to the World's conflicts, whilst working toward concrete change and long-awaited peace. He said, "We like to see this Apostolic Journey as a Missionary Journey, which confirms the attitude of Pope Francis to be a true missionary of the good news". St Paul speaks of the Good News as "Christ Jesus, who sacrificed Himself as a ransom for them all".

Faith in this was at the heart of Queen Elizabeth's life of duty and service: a Facebook Friend, Fr Martin Pratt, recalled in a post these words from her Christmas Broadcast in 2002: "I know how much I rely on my own Faith to guide me through good times and bad."

This Faith is what we are committing ourselves to live and share on Home Mission Sunday. These words of Fergal Keen in a broadcast on the Queen's passing and resetting our relationship on these islands struck me: "we are called to offer hope out of the griefs of history." That is the noble calling of every Christian: we have a Vocation to Peace, which we find in Christ. We pray for our leaders; we pray for ourselves in the Alleluia Verse for the 25th Sunday "Open our heart, o Lord, to accept the words of your Son."

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