



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

Office for Ethnic Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches
Co-ordinator: Monsignor Daniel McHugh

“So Busy Making A Living that We Fail to Make a Life”

Reflection for the 28th Week of the Year

11 October 2026

Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that we may know the hope to which he has called us.” (Ephesians 1:18)

On 24th September I was happy to celebrate 59 years of Priesthood, and now I have begun my Diamond Jubilee Year! You may find it too much as I share memories during this special year with so much to



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give thanks for! One of my special memories is of visits to New York with fundraising in mind while I was Director of the Maryvale Institute. Archbishop Couve de Murville opened the door to staying with Cardinal O'Connor at St Patrick's Cathedral and there I was blessed to celebrate mass at the High Altar, where the remains of Archbishop Fulton Sheen rested at that time. He had been Bishop of Rochester, New York, and was buried there; afterwards his body was returned to his home diocese of Peoria. On 24th September this year, his Beatification took place. I was aware when I celebrated Mass in New York, that I was in the presence of the great Evangelist, a man who used modern media to communicate the Gospel, but I learned more on the occasion of his Beatification. Cardinal Tagle, a pro-prefect of the Dicastery of Evangelization in Rome, pronounced the Church's declaration on Archbishop Sheen's holiness of life, and to the applause of pilgrims described Archbishop Sheen as "a son of the United States of America" and "indeed, son of the world". I was



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personally so pleased to hear his grandmother was a Fulton from County Roscommon, my Father's home county in Ireland. There are many aspects of the Beatification Ceremony that could be commented on, not least the miracle that led to the Beatification: the revival from stillbirth of James Fulton Engstrom in 2010, who was present to present a major relic of the Archbishop during the liturgy. The aspect that impacted most for me came in the Homily of Cardinal Tagle, who praised Archbishop Sheen as, 'a storyteller of Jesus'. Sheen had told a friend who asked why he felt called to share the Gospel and tell the story of Jesus: 'I never tire of telling it. I never tire of improving my telling of it. I love my calling.' (cf. Gina Christian OSV News) It's something I identify with and I'm sure other priests do too: I will ask Blessed Fulton Sheen's intercession that I may continue to communicate the wonder of our Faith ever more effectively.



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In this connection, on the occasion of the celebration of 800 years since the death (the Transitus) of Saint Francis of Assisi this past weekend 3/4 October I noted an article in America Magazine by Stephanie Soldano who said 'all of life was a pilgrimage for Saint Francis of Assisi. It only made sense 800 years after his death, that I should go on my own pilgrimage in search of him.' Stephanie writes a most interesting article arising from the experience of following in the footsteps of Francis. In a way, it's what I did personally a while ago: having been asked to preach at the Golden Jubilee Mass at Saint Francis Church Kington, I went back to Assisi to visit some of the significant places associated with the journey of Francis. I entered into the experience of his life in a way I had not done before, though I had been to Assisi many times. The result, I was able to communicate better the heart of the 800 years celebration of Saint Francis, and produce a video of it which has been appreciated by many: the Jubilee Year goes on till January next, and we can all



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continue to benefit from the lessons he taught us. For example, considering the Gospel Parable for the 28th Sunday where the image presented for the Kingdom of Heaven is the familiar one of the Banquet to which all are invited I found myself turning to the Hymn 'All Creatures of our God and King', which is based on the Canticle of the Sun by St Francis for our weekly Burning Bush vlog, and a wondrous picture taken by one of our team (Damien Walmsley) of poppies in a field; another image that leads us to thanksgiving for all we have been given through Father, Son and Holy Spirit. People in their hundreds of thousands gathered in procession in Assisi to celebrate the Transitus (the passing) of Francis this past weekend.

And this coming weekend, on 11 October, I will be celebrating, and I invite you to join me, the day of the opening of the Second Vatican Council in Rome in 1962 (another special memory being a student in Rome at the time). The Council was called especially to reach out to



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the world today with the good news of our Faith. As the Parable this Sunday demonstrates, we can be too busy with worldly affairs to see/to attend to what matters. Francis discovered that in his life and showed his response in his conversion. The Church continues to follow his example.

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