



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

Miracles Still Happen

Reflection for the 18th Week of the Year

2 August 2026

Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ.” (Romans 8:35)

As I begin to write this Reflection inspired by the Scripture readings for Mass on the 18th Sunday of the Year (A) and the Feast of the Transfiguration on 6 August, my mind is still on a visit I made to Holywell, the National Shrine of St Winefride and her Well in North Wales on Thursday last. I was preparing for a Day Pilgrimage with a group from our Ethnic Chaplaincies on 5th September, and I had the opportunity to interview Kate, the manager of the Shrine, for a video to set the scene for the pilgrims. It is a Shrine that is 1300 years old, with pilgrims making their way to venerate Winefride’s relics and be



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blessed with water from her Well. It was moving to hear Kate speak of people going to the Shrine for healing and in particular a young woman who went there in prayer of thanksgiving for a cyst being removed from her ovary. It was a miracle she had experienced and that Kate was able to tell me the story of. In a sceptical world, it is special to hear of people experiencing miracles today, and not just hear of their taking place in past times. I have been to Holywell on a number of occasions over the years, starting with my family, and I wanted to introduce the Ethnic Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches I now serve, to this special place of Pilgrimage. I hope they will find it and the surrounding area a place they want to return to, as they do Walsingham and other places of Faith.

As I joined the Chinese Community and their Chaplain, Fr Joseph Liang, for Mass in St Catherine's Birmingham, earlier today, Tuesday, 28 July, I reflected on the "miracle" that is taking place before us in the Church today: it may not fit the strict theological definition of a miracle, but it is evidence of the wonder of God's grace in our midst. The Priest who built the new St Catherine's was Fr Patrick Mcquire, originally a member of the Missionary Society of St Columba, initially known as the Maynooth Mission to China. And, here we were with a



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priest from China celebrating Mass in a Church at the edge of the Chinese Quarter of Birmingham. On Saturday last the Hong Kong Community and one of their priests Fr Robert Ng was celebrating Mass in this same St Catherine's. At the door of the Church welcoming us in was Fr Babu Pureti, Parish Priest, a member of the Missionaries of Faith Community which has a strong representation of Indian Priests in the Archdiocese: he also welcomes the Chaldean Catholic Church when it comes for Mass with Fr Andrawis, who is from Iraq and based in London. The countries that once received missionaries from the West are now repaying us with their priests and their people enriching and supporting the mission here. Like the lady who returned to Holywell to give thanks for healing, we give thanks for those who are strengthening our Catholic presence in this land.

In the Gospel for the 18th Sunday we have a miracle worked by Jesus himself which is of special significance. Until now, in the recent readings from St Matthew, Jesus has been speaking of the Kingdom of God in parables: last week in this series of Reflections I homed in on the Pearl of Great Price, our Faith; something we need to recognise for the great gift it is, and to cherish, and pass on to others, especially our children. This week in St Matthew we have the account of the miracle



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of the loaves and the fish. The miracle can be read in different ways: the most obvious is that it demonstrates the love of Jesus for the people who are following him and are hungry; it can also be read in relation to the Parable of the mustard seed which we read just first a few weeks ago – “even the smallest of offerings can produce abundant results when placed in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven” (cf Sunday Connection); and it can be read in relation to Jesus as Son of God who will give us the Holy Eucharist, His Body and Blood which feeds our hunger and thirst for a life that never ends. This is the miracle that takes place among us every day; it is the miracle prefigured in the celebration of the Transfiguration of our Lord which takes place this coming week on 6th August. In Chapter 17 of St Matthew which is read to recall the Transfiguration we hear as Jesus “was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white.... and a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” On this Feast we are reminded that the Bread of Life we take at the Altar is no ordinary meal, it is the miracle of the Risen Christ who takes us into his Divine Presence (symbolised in the bright cloud). We give thanks again for this ‘daily miracle’ in the Eucharist, but let us not forget to look at this Sunday’s Gospel for the 18th Sunday at yet another level: Ernest Ferlita in his commentary



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says, “Jesus looks upon the people “with eyes of compassion”; and his action reveals “the heart of God”... Seeing Jesus in action may we.... follow him more closely.” We are called by him to “go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?