



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

Do Whatever He Tells You

(John 2:5)

Reflection for the 21st Week of the Year

23 August 2026

Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5)

Maybe it is coincidence, but I was struck by the image of Mary in the Apparition at Knock, Ireland. She is wearing a crown and, further, the Apparition took place on the eve of the memorial of the Queenship of Mary, the Octave of the Assumption, which is celebrated on 22 August, Saturday of this coming week. In Ireland, the Feast of Our Lady of Knock is kept on 17th August, as the Feast of St Pius X was already in



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place on the day of his death 21 August. However, I understand in Knock itself the Feast is kept on the day of the Apparition. Another special feature of the Apparition was the Lamb of God on the Altar alongside Mary who was seen together with St Joseph and St John. This gives the Apparition a Eucharistic as well as a Marian dimension. Last weekend we celebrated the Assumption of Our Lady which we recalled was proclaimed a Dogma by Pope Pius XII in 1950. It was the same Pius XII (now declared “Venerable”) who established the celebration of the Queenship of Mary in 1954. In an article in Franciscan Media we read “The Feast is a logical follow up to the Assumption... In his 1954 encyclical ‘To the Queen of Heaven’ Pius XII points out that Mary deserves the title because she is the Mother of God, because she is clearly associated as the New Eve with Jesus’ redemptive work, because of her preeminent perfection, and because of her intercessory power.”

When Pope St John Paul II made an Apostolic Journey to Ireland in September 1979, he went as a Pilgrim to Knock, so marking the Centenary of the Apparition. He spoke of the challenges the Church faces in living and spreading the Gospel today, and highlighted the



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importance of Mary in this task, pointing particularly to her words at the miracle of Cana in Galilee: “Do whatever he tells you” (John 2: 5). He went on “Whatever Jesus tells us - through his life and by his word – have been preserved for us in the Gospels and in the letters of the Apostles and of St Paul and transmitted to us by the Church... Christ has not left his followers without guidance in the task of the understanding and living the Gospel. Before returning to the Father, he promised to send his Holy Spirit to the Church: ‘But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all I have said to you.’” On this 21st Sunday we are especially aware of the special role Peter, the Rock, and his successors have in handing on the Faith in Jesus, and application of his teaching to the times we live in. In response to the question of Jesus to the Apostles regarding his identity, it is Peter who speaks up: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” In response Jesus says: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.” Peter goes on to play an important role in the early Christian community as a “spokesperson and leader” (cf Sunday Connection, Loyola Press). In his first letter, Peter who was spoken of by Jesus as the rock on which the Church is built, speaks of the Christian Community as “living stones”: “be yourselves built into a spiritual



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house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: “Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone (Peter is referring to Jesus) chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ... But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (1 Peter 2)

Living in the light of the Gospel is at the heart of the teaching of the successor of Peter today. We ask, the prayers of Mary, in the words of the Collect at Mass for the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

“O God, who made the Mother of your Son to be our Mother and our Queen, graciously grant that, sustained by her intercession, we may attain in the heavenly kingdom the glory promised to your children.”

Amen.



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As the glorified Jesus remains with us as our king till the end of time (Mt 28:30) so does Mary, who was assumed into heaven and crowned queen of heaven and earth. And, she continues to say to her children:

“Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5).