



## **Missionaries of Hope among all the Peoples**

**28<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year 12 October 2025**

**Reflection Mgr Daniel McHugh**

**“Shout to the Lord all the earth; break forth in joyous song.”**

This past weekend, the Jubilee Year was marked in Rome by a celebration that brought together the Jubilee of the Missionary World and the Jubilee of Migrants. In my Reflection last weekend I spoke of the theme “Migrants: Missionaries of Hope,” which highlighted their particular contribution to the evangelizing work of the Church today. This coming weekend, I am focusing on the call we all have as Church: to be “Missionaries of Hope among all the Peoples.” This is the theme being taken up on World Mission Sunday, 19 October, which is promoted by Missio, the International Organization that takes forward the theme chosen by the Pope each year. The Missio National Director reminded us recently that earlier Pope Francis RIP “chose this year’s theme, reminding us of our call to be messengers and builders of hope in this Jubilee Year. Rooted in Christ’s resurrection, this hope has the power to transform lives and heal our world ... This day of prayer and giving invites Catholics worldwide to share the Good News of God’s love for all peoples.”

Last Sunday, I was blessed to be present in St Peter’s Square Mass with Pope Leo and to concelebrate with many other priests, including a small delegation from the Ethnic Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches of our Diocese and some 40,000 people. Pope Leo called us “to renew our awareness of the missionary vocation and “to bring the joy and consolation of the Gospel to all.”

In our Delegation, we discussed how we might encourage our different Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches to play their part in implementing the call to be Missionaries of Hope as part of the whole Church on Mission. We felt a Synodal Approach should be adopted: in other words, it should not be top-down but rather involve priests and people in reflection and prayer together. Funnily enough, I was listening to an interview on Radio 4’s Today Programme this morning, Wednesday 8 October, with Charlie Mackesy, the Author of “The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse”: it is a story of 4 characters who embark on a journey, exploring themes of friendship, self-worth, kindness, and hope. The

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boy represents curiosity, the mole enthusiasm, the fox past hurt and the horse embodying wisdom and self-worth. The book emphasizing that asking for help is a sign of courage, not weakness, and encourages self acceptance and compassion for others.

What I found most interesting in the interview (on the occasion of a follow-up book) was the approach Mackesy takes to writing and illustrations. He said the most important thing for him in his work is “crossing the river together”. It is not someone telling you how to cross; no, we’re on the same side of the river, and we need each other to cross. I thought of the vast topic of mission and evangelization, and how the Church approaches that today.

It is not as if there is nothing there to help us cross the river, like the stepping stones across the river in Dovedale, which many of us are familiar with. One of the most important stepping stones is, of course, “prayer”. This comes to me first because of celebrating Mass with a French priest in Italian on Monday morning 6 October in St Peter’s Basilica. The priest spoke of the Saint of the Day, St Bruno, and the importance for him of “silence” to enable prayer to flourish. You may remember his being the founder of the Carthusians, who are famous for their commitment to “silence” in their religious life. Other aspects of prayer that came home to me during my few days in Rome:

- the difference it makes to have the opportunity to gather with others: the Papal Mass for the Jubilee of Mission highlighted the international dimension of the Church too; it is indeed for all peoples – they had gathered from all over the world. The 2 priests I vested with were from Slovakia; the priest I sat next to at the Concelebration was from Argentina. Our Sunday Mass is a gathering for all; the Catholic Community is indeed universal, our prayer crosses all boundaries of race, culture, and language.
- and, prayer to Our Lady, especially the Rosary the importance of which we celebrated yesterday 7 October, was noted at the Jubilee particularly in a Rosary Festival on Sunday evening 5 October with a candlelight Rosary Procession around St Peter’s Square: An Icon was carried, reading from Scripture and Papal teaching came across the sound system and hymns were sung by the gathered crowd. There is no doubt that the Rosary honouring the Mother of Jesus focuses on the key mysteries of our Faith, and draws people of all ages to the wonder and joy of Catholicism.

It is in the Sunday Eucharist especially that we continue to be nurtured as a People of Faith, ready to be Missionaries of Hope. And, the Scripture on this particular Sunday draws attention to the importance of gratitude in our life of

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faith. The story of the healing of the 10 lepers in the Sunday Gospel where only one returns to give thanks, gives Jesus the opportunity to show that gratitude leads to “salvation”, to something much more than physical healing. Thanksgiving is a dominant idea in the prayer of Jesus: an example of this is brought to our attention by Fr Ferlita in his commentary where he points to Jesus prayer for thanksgiving at the healing of Lazarus, even before his prayer is heard when Lazarus his friend is raised.

In this month of the Rosary, we remember the prayer of Mary, “The almighty has done great things for me and Holy is His name.” She is always an example for us, and in this case, she reminds us that being a people of thanks leads to even greater gifts. May we, like Mary, be a people of thanks, leading others to her Son.

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