



21st Week of the Year: Reflection on the Gospel for Sunday, 22nd/23rd August 2021
Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Who shall we go to?”

I was blessed to have the Church of Blessed Robert Grissold as part of the Parish of St George and St Teresa Dorridge when I was appointed there in 2001. I say this because the dedication of that beautiful Church in the village of Balsall Common to Blessed Robert Grissold led me to think about his life and martyrdom in 1604. We celebrated the 400 years in my time as Parish Priest. Robert Grissold, a layman, had refused to leave Blessed John Sugar when he was arrested on the way from celebrating Mass at Baddesley, and both were Martyred at Warwick. Not only did Grissold show his dedication to the Priest but of course his love of the Mass. The Eucharist was, together with loyalty to the Pope, one of the central matters for those who refused to take the oath in King Henry’s break from Rome. For them the reality of Jesus being the Bread of Life and his words from St John chapter 6 in last week’s Gospel “the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world” were not in doubt. They were not prepared to go away with those who said “This is intolerable language” in this week’s concluding section of chapter 6. The reality of Jesus presence, his flesh and blood, in the Eucharist, shocked many and we are told they went away. Jesus did not say his presence was symbolic, he said it was really Him. When the majority of the Disciples had gone away, Jesus turned to the 12: “will you also go away?” This Sunday’s Gospel contains those famous words of Peter: “Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life.”

The “real presence” is possible because Jesus was God, and with God all things are possible: the God of Creation, the God of Resurrection, is also the God who gave us the Eucharist, and the real presence of Jesus in it.

This past week I prepared a Podcast on the Apostle St Bartholomew who together with St Jude Thaddeus is credited with being the Apostle of Armenia, which has been in the news quite recently because of trouble in the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, a Muslim country. It is quite a complex story, but sadly Armenian 97% Christian is at the heart of the first Genocide of the 20th Century at the end of the Ottoman Empire. Christians then and now, especially in the Middle East, know what belief in Jesus as Son of God and for Catholics, the centrality of the Eucharist, can mean. We watch anxiously as the few Catholics we have left in Afghanistan are waiting to get out to safety.

The challenge for us, the Church of today, is to pass on to our children, to our families, the full truth of the Gospel we have been reading this past several weeks. When I retired as Parish Priest and started my new role as Co-ordinator of Ethnic Chaplaincies I was asked what gift I would like from my parishioners; I asked for a small tabernacle I could have for reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in my home. So every morning and night I go before it to pray: I am very blessed as a Priest to have this privilege. In my Parish is

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

Ethnic Chaplaincies

Dorridge I was able to create a small lobby where people could drop in to pray before the Blessed Sacrament at any time of the day, even when the body of the Church was closed. Why? Because the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, is central to the presence of Jesus with us to the end of time.

Let us give thanks for the Faith of Peter and the Apostles, the Faith that has sustained so many even in the midst of so much suffering in our day. And let us ensure we treasure it and pass it on with all our might. Blessed Robert Grissold and all the martyrs for the Eucharist, pray for us.

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese