



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

*“We all Gain When the Law of Love
... Overcomes Calculation”*

(Pope Leo, Angelus 20 September 2026)

Reflection for the 26th Week of the Year

27 September 2026

Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

(Philippians 2:5)

As I have been considering the Scripture readings for Sunday coming with a view to writing my reflection this Wednesday 23rd September, I have taken a break to look at emails. One I took special note of came yesterday from Fr Philip Griffin, the Walsingham Pilgrimage Director, whose task is to promote devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham and encourage parish



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groups to join the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Walsingham on the first Sunday in May. The National Feast is celebrated on 24th September each year. Fr Philip's email has come in to offer a short homily that can be used on this occasion to increase knowledge and understanding of the significance of this special shrine. The following are his words:

"Today's feast invites us to recall nearly 1000 years of devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham, and the important witness Walsingham has today for Catholics and Christians with a devotion to Our Lady.

Our Lady appeared in Walsingham to Richeldis the lady of the manor in 1061 and asked her to build a replica of the Holy House in Nazareth, where the Annunciation took place. What began as a local place of devotion developed into a shrine visited by pilgrims from across the country and from northern Europe; seeking Our Lady's intercession and honouring the Mother of the Lord.

At the Reformation everything came to an abrupt end. The priory closed, the image of Our Lady was publicly destroyed, and the buildings turned to ruin. It was 300 years before the restoration of the Shrine and devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham was restored, and the Shrine is now the National Shrine to Our Lady in England.



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Every shrine to Our Lady has its particular character, and message. Walsingham set in the rolling Norfolk countryside is a place of peace and prayer, where we honour Our Lady. It promotes devotion to Our Lady, the sanctity of human life, the importance of the family, the discovery of our individual vocations, and the joy of discipleship.”

I am pleased to see Fr Phillip’s helpful homily because of my own devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham whose Feast tomorrow marks my 59th Ordination Anniversary: a day to give thanks for my Vocation and turn to Our Lady of Walsingham in prayers for the coming year, which will be a special one, the Diamond Jubilee.

There are many dimensions for reflection on the Shrine at Walsingham. One that comes to mind in the light of the Scripture readings for this coming 26th Sunday is summed up in Luke 2:19 “Mary pondered all these things in her heart” where Mary reflects on the miraculous events surrounding the birth of Jesus. Mary has already submitted to God's will and now she continues her journey in Faith, which would include suffering and the Cross. We are told in Luke 2:33 that Mary and Joseph “marvelled at what was being said about him” when Simeon spoke at the Presentation in the Temple. In the parable for the 26th Sunday our attention is directed to the sons’ invite to work in the vineyard; Joseph



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Pollard in his book “Finding Fresh Light” focusses on the son who changes his mind and goes to work in his father’s vineyard. He writes: “In the same way, it takes reflection and prayer to uncover God’s will for each of us in the circumstances of our individual lives. Our Lord wants us to seek God’s will as best we can, with a great desire to uncover it, and with a ready obedience to follow it when we find it.

We need to become modern day Jeremiah’s coming to the kingdom and to its discipline as he came to the word of God. For all its discipline, and its cost to him personally, he came to accept the word with an enthusiastic heart. “When I found your words, I devoured them; they became my joy and the happiness of my heart.” (Jer 15:16)

Father Ferlita in “Paths of life” writes, “We can imagine a third son not mentioned in the Parable. When this son is asked to go work in the vineyard, he says “Yes Sir,” and indeed he does go. This son is like Jesus himself, who contains in himself not only the good and the better but the best, who “though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself becoming obedient to death, even death on a Cross.” (Phil 2:6-8) Christ’s best is manifested in his obedience, and that obedience translates as loving service.” Fr Ferlita concludes: “let that



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mind which was in him be also in you.” See Philippians 2:5 “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

Pope Leo put it so well at the Angelus on Sunday last when speaking of service to the world today, “we all gain when the law of love... overcomes calculation.” That was the love that underpinned the “Yes” of Mary we celebrate in Walsingham.