



## Who is the Lazarus in my life?

### Reflection for the 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year

Mgr Daniel McHugh 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**“Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Tim 6:12)**

As I write this Reflection I do so on the 58<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of my Ordination to Priesthood. The Liturgy was of the Sunday in Ordinary Time in my home parish, Holy Family, in Coventry and the Celebrant Archbishop Dwyer. It was also the Feast of Our Lady of Ransom which subsequently became the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham, which we celebrate today, September 24<sup>th</sup>. The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom has as its main objective the evangelisation of England and to return the country to devotion to Mary, following the sad events of 1538; it was founded at the time when public devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham was restored first at the mission in Kings Lynn in 1897, and later in Houghton-St-Giles, Walsingham, 1934.

I chose these words for my Ordination card: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”, and the cross from Coventry Cathedral inspired my artist friend who designed the front of the card – you may recall that cross is made from roof timbers following the bombing of the Cathedral in World War II and the words “Father Forgive” are inscribed below. I had high ideals, as I’m sure every priest does at his Ordination. And, those ideals continue to be nurtured, especially in the Sunday Liturgy.

Reading the comments of Fr Brendan McGuire (Seeds for the Soul) on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in the Gospel for the 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday I was led to think about who the Lazarus in my life might be? He asks “Who in our lives do we walk past every day and not notice? It is probably not a homeless person. Most of us live in good neighbourhoods (Fr McGuire wrote this reflection while in San Jose, California) where we have few or no homeless people ‘per se’. But there is more to home than a house. We can be homeless in different ways. We can be homeless in the sense that we have no family or friends.

Who are the homeless in our lives? Maybe it is the receptionist or secretary at work who we walk past every day and do not know their name. Or maybe it is the

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janitor or maintenance workers at school who we see every day but never greet them. Or maybe it is that person who sits alone at lunch and we never talk with them, because they look strange or funny. Who is the homeless, nameless person in our lives that we walk past every day?

Who is the Lazarus in our lives that we need to reach out to? Having listened to the aftermath of the murder of Charlie Kirk I noted the forgiveness offered by his wife. In the midst of the sorrow Andrea Bocelli, the legendary tenor stepped forward with compassion, offering his prayers and lifting his voice – not in song but in solidarity. I read in a news report “his tears and words of comfort for Charlie Kirk and his grieving wife remind us all of the healing power of empathy, faith and love.” And, the Report went on “Social media was filled with messages of sympathy for Kirk and his wife, many of them echoing Bocelli’s words of prayer”. The Report concluded: “In a world often fractured by division, his response brings us back to what matters most: love, compassion, and belief that even in our darkest hours, hope can endure.”

The reference in the Report to the social media promoting hope takes us to a place where there is so much power to heal, though it is often used to cause division. The canonisation of Carlo Acutis recently brings to the fore the power of contemporary technology to help us reach those who are hungry for truth and love, the wonder of the Catholic Faith through the power of social media.

We often feel there is little we can do to change the world we live in but each of us has the power to reach out and touch others with love.

This coming week we have an outstanding example of one who did this in small ways, St Therese of Lisieux. Her “Little Way” encourages us to find opportunities to show love in small ways, mundane moments of daily lives, such as doing chores, being kind to others and practising patience.

Let us reflect this coming week on “Who is the Lazarus in my life?” As St Paul says in 1 Timothy: “Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.” (1 Timothy 6:12).

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