



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

Modern Day Prophets

Reflection for the 27th Week of the Year

4 October 2026

Mgr Daniel McHugh

“I chose you out of the world, says the Lord, that you should go and bear fruit.” (John 15:16)

We have all been delighted to see the warm and enthusiastic welcome Pope Leo has received in France this past week. You might be surprised to hear him speak Catholic truths that are often challenged in the world today, and yet to see how well this teaching has been received. Aleteia, the international Catholic Newsletter reported: Just over 2 months ago, France legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia; surrounded by many who are suffering illnesses, some terminal, Pope Leo made clear in Lourdes that “we must reject the temptation to cause death under the guise of false compassion.” “It is impossible to regard causing death as something normal. What is legal is not necessarily moral,” he said. He



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

went on “I know that some of you, because of particular illnesses and, at times, terrible pain, your horizon may appear dark, uncertain and without hope. But no human law should ever make you lose the certainty of your dignity.”

Kathleen Hattrup the Editor goes on in her report: “in one of the most famous locations in France, where the sick and suffering arrive from all over the world, the Pope insisted that the sick are not a burden. Speaking directly to them, he exalted their beautiful role in humanity and the Church: “Dear brothers and sisters who are sick, I want to tell you that you are not a burden. You are the beating heart of our humanity and the precious treasure for the church.”

He appealed to health care workers to learn from the atmosphere of Lourdes, where sick and suffering are shown so much tenderness and care. “I urge you resolutely develop structures for palliative care and research,” he said. “I appeal to the entire healthcare community to remember the profound meaning of your vocation, which is to care for a suffering person, not to eliminate that person. Yes, dear friends, be passionate servants of life.”

When you hear what Pope Leo is saying, you know it speaks to the heart of so many, and we thank God for his ability to communicate so well. It is



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

not possible in the course of a Homily of standard length to cover all the key subjects pertinent to our Catholic faith Pope Leo addressed. Just to say: his meeting with young people, some 80,000 in the Stade de France, was another highlight of the 4-day Apostolic Journey. The Ateleia account takes us to the Stadium where the great history of the impact of the Catholic faith in France was on display: The Stadium where we see so many great sporting events was suddenly playing host to several centuries of French Catholic history. “Beneath all the spectacle was a powerful reminder of just how much good has been accumulated across centuries of Catholic life in France. There were mystics and missionaries, priests and religious, people who cared for the poor and sick, taught, evangelized, and served the communities around them.”

Among those who featured, Aleteia records “Mary Magdalene and Lazarus evoked the earliest Christian traditions of France, while later figures included Martin of Tours, Joan of Arc, Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, Thérèse of Lisieux and Charles de Foucauld (I would add Margaret Mary who gave us Sacred Heart Devotion). Different centuries and very different ways of living the faith were brought together on the same enormous stage.” And those watching were about to be told that this history now belonged to them... Then a celebration of what the Church in France had been became an invitation to consider what the thousands of young Catholics watching might become.”



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

The Aleteia account concludes: “Leo's final prayer continued that invitation, urging them to turn away from pride, vanity, violence, and greed and instead pursue justice, faith, charity, patience and gentleness. The Christian struggle, he reminded them, isn't fought against other people, because “our only weapon is that of self-giving love.” Together the Stadium responded: “Here I am, Lord.”

It will be good to have time to speak about Pope Leo's final day at Metz where he addressed “The Roots of Europe for Peace and Unity” and expanded on the contribution of Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of Europe today whose Christian background helped him lay the foundations of a Europe that was aware of the urgent need to tear down the walls that were dividing it. He “committed himself to peace and fraternity among peoples who, after having been in conflict for so long, finally recognised their need for each other,” the Holy Father said.

The vineyard spoken of in the Gospel Parable this 27th Sunday is interpreted as the Church in the world today, and we are being called to bear fruit there. Jesus says in the Acclamation, “I chose you out of the world that you should go and bear fruit.” We have been blessed in my years as a priest to have Popes who are truly prophets for today in the sense that they break open God's Word for our time, show us the way to



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

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

live and witness to the Gospel in a complex world. Pope Leo continues this tradition: showing us the way forward, the way to grow and nurture the vineyard that is the Church, alive for people of our time.

You made feel you have little to give: I urge you to remember St Thérèse of Lisieux whose feast is celebrated tomorrow, 1 October. She believed doing little things with love and she has become a Doctor of the Church, truly a Saint, a Prophet in our time.