



14<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time: 4<sup>th</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Reflection on the Scriptures for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

### **“Where did the man get all this”**

As I write this Reflection on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July I am conscious that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, is meeting in Rome with the Christian leaders of Lebanon for a Day of Reflection and Prayer for the future of their country. Here in the Archdiocese of Birmingham 2 schools that are linked to the Immaculate Conception School, Beirut, together with a school in Liverpool, will be praying for success of that Day in Rome too. Because they have come together to share their prayer and Mission as a result of the Day of Prayer in early May promoted by an organization called Fellowship and Aid for Christians of the East, they are much more conscious of the challenges faced by Christians in Lebanon today: for most of us the news of explosions and deaths in the port area of Beirut not long ago might have been the first time Lebanon’s problems began to enter our consciousness. The great challenge it faces through Islamic extremism, poor political leadership and refugee problems as a result of turmoil in the region especially in Syria and Iraq, are forcing themselves onto our agenda, especially in the Church.

Pope Francis has taken a special interest in the area and went to nearby Iraq recently. He took the message of “Fraternity” to all Religious Denominations and Faiths. I think it is true to say that his message was seen as Prophetic, in other words, he was seen as one who took God’s word to people there, to all those who long for Peace and Hope. His meeting with the leading Muslim, Ayatollah Sistani, was particularly moving, as we saw both committed to bringing an end to conflict and persecution.

There are many voices; all sorts of prophecies of doom being expressed in Social Media. It’s important to choose what is worthwhile. The focus on listening to the voice of the Prophet is the one I want to draw attention to in the readings for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B. The first reading from the Prophet Ezekiel highlights the fact that self-interest is so often at the heart of how people act; it has often been the motivation too for the involvement of nations in other peoples’ affairs, as we realise today in the Middle East. The thinking of Pope Francis on Fraternity, that under God we are all Sisters and Brothers, comes from another perspective: what does God, Father of All call us to? People of Faith, and the Great Faiths – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – believe in the one God. On that basis is our Fraternity, and how we relate to one another.

But, people do not always want to listen to the voice of the Prophet. If Pope Francis has met opposition, even from within the Church leadership itself, then he must know the Lord Himself disturbed people as we hear in the Gospel today. There were those who could see the wisdom of His teaching, but couldn’t accept it because he was from among their own community. We see the “human” side of Jesus reflected in his being amazed at their lack of Faith.

**Monsignor Daniel McHugh**

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese

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We thank God for the Prophetic voice of Pope Francis in the world of our day, especially in his call for Fraternity among all peoples and his call to the Faiths to take a lead in working for Justice and Peace. Can he make a difference? Can we play a part? He has said recently we cannot give up in our Prayer; though the Lord Himself was rejected, suffered and died, He Rose again and is with us now.

This is why we have Hope in the midst of so much that goes contrary to the way of Jesus in our world today.

That is why the Holy Father has entitled his latest book “Peace on Earth. Fraternity is possible”. Keep praying and working for Peace. If you look around you, you will see green shoots that give Hope.

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