



Migrants Missionaries of Hope

27th Sunday of the Year 5 October 2025

Reflection Mgr Daniel McHugh

“The Righteous shall live by his Faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)

Recently I returned from a Jubilee Year Pilgrimage to Puglia taking in many beautiful places of Faith in South East Italy. As I arrived back in Lode Lane, near Solihull Hospital, I saw many flags on display: the Union Jack and the flag of St George.

At first, I wondered what was happening and then I realised the display was to do with the anti-migrant sentiment that is being voiced so publicly just now. Over the weekend there was a great deal of discussion on the radio and T.V. about immigration in light of debate especially around the Labour Party Conference which is coming to its climax this Tuesday 30 September, as I write this Reflection for the coming Sunday, when I will be in Rome on Pilgrimage for the Jubilee of Migrants! One of the discussions I heard on a radio phone-in was around the meaning of the flags: while we express allegiance to our country in displaying them, it was the general consensus that at the moment flags are being used to express opposition to people coming from other countries, especially those coming illegally.

So, what is the Catholic Church saying by having the Jubilee event celebrating migrants in the Mission of the Church. I don't expect the Church to comment officially on the practical issues around boats crossing the Channel or to tell us what to do about hotel accommodation that has sparked off some of the violent protests we have seen in parts of the country. On the other hand we would expect the Church to point out the respect we should have for people of different colour and different faith.

For my own part I can speak of the riches we have in the Church coming from the presence of Catholics from different countries who bring with them Faith in Our Lord, in Mary and in the Church that is strengthening the host community in its witness in a world that is more secular than in the past. Indeed a good number of our priests are coming today from Asia, Africa and the East: we would find it

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difficult to cover many of our Parish Churches now without their presence. And, because they are here, Catholics coming from countries with very different cultures and languages are sustained in Faith by periodic or regular monthly Masses among their own, they are not lost to our predatory society and can gradually play a greater part in the wider Church. In this Jubilee Year we are all called to be “Missionaries of Hope”.

The place where we are nurtured on our Faith Journey is the Eucharist; I was thinking especially of the importance of the Scriptures as well as the Sacred Body and Blood of Our Lord today, the memorial of St Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin way back in about 400 A.D. This coming Sunday the Gospel has the familiar parable of the mustard seed followed by teaching by Jesus that may puzzle us! The Sunday Connection is a Catholic Commentary on the Sunday Gospel that is helpful to our understanding; here is what it says:

»In today's Gospel we hear Jesus teach about faith and service to God. The context is a continuing dialogue between Jesus and his followers about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus has just finished an instruction on sin and forgiveness. There are two related teachings that Jesus offers to his disciples when they cry out for an increase in faith. The first is the familiar reminder that faith, even just a little, will enable the followers of Jesus to do wondrous things. But this uplifting and inspiring teaching is quickly followed by the second teaching, a caution about knowing one's place in God's plans. The disciples of Jesus are to understand themselves as servants to God and his plans. Even when God works wonders through us, with our mustard seed-sized faith, we must not seek praise. Our participation in God's plans is God's grace to us—nothing more, nothing less. When we are graced enough to cooperate with God, the work we do is nothing more than our obligation to God as faithful stewards. And yet, our faith enables us to believe that what we have offered in service to God, as his servants, can be made to produce a hundredfold.«

The Commentary leads us into understanding the background to the Scripture passage which enriches our Faith and our ability through prayer to be “Missionaries of Hope” i.e. witnesses to the Way lived and proclaimed by Our Lord. I am looking forward to the teaching of Pope Leo this coming Sunday as he opens up the Scriptures for us at the Jubilee Mass and relates that teaching to the theme of the Jubilee Year.

Our Delegation from the Archdiocese is being provided by the Ethnic Chaplains and Eastern Catholic Churches. We will be reflecting on how the different Catholic Communities we represent can co-operate with the wider Church in being Witnesses to Hope, playing our part in Evangelization. We will go through the Holy Door at St Peter's as we begin the Jubilee, and conclude the event with

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Mass in the Crypt of St Peter's, close to the relics of the first Pope, on Monday morning 6th October. Personally, I will also go to pray at the tomb of Pope St John XXIII in St Peter's that morning too: we celebrate his Feast this coming weekend 11 October. I remember as a young student in Rome the face of love and optimism he brought to the Church as he opened our doors to the wider world with the Second Vatican Council. Pope Francis quoted him as saying "I never met a pessimist who managed to do something good". And he went on "The Lord is the first not to be pessimistic. He constantly tries to open up paths of resurrection for all of us."

Good Pope John pray for us.

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