

Tuesday Reflection 20 July 2021

Looked at superficially, today's Gospel from Matthew is about Jesus and His earthly family. Unfortunately, it can then lead to speculation about whether Mary (and presumably Joseph) had further children, and all of a sudden we are embroiled in a discussion about sex and completely miss the point of this Gospel passage.

In contrast to Mark, Matthew does not have Jesus seemingly rejecting his earthly family. Reaching out His hand he makes an inclusive gesture, perhaps significantly adding the word 'sister' to those embraced in His family.

Last Tuesday we were looking at some of the aftermath of the England team's performance in the European Cup Final, and considering the xenophobia and racial abuse to which this gave rise. Fortunately, a massive reaction has set in, which, as one *Guardian* writer put it, has shown us the kind of country we might be - a country which rejoices in its diversity and discovers the unity of purpose which Jesus embraces in today's Gospel.

This unity in diversity is exemplified by three members of the England football team: Marcus Rashford, Bukayo Saka and Jason Sancho, all of whom have triumphed over adversity and prejudice to reach the top in their sport. We know that apart from being a brilliant footballer, Marcus Rashford is committed to overcoming child poverty and disadvantage, but Jason Sancho and Bukayo Saka have also demonstrated a willingness to engage with social issues and to use their influence and status as role models on behalf of the underprivileged.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that all three of them, Bukayo Saka, Jason Sancho and Marcus Rashford, are practising Christians, who see themselves as members of that great family which has Christ as its Head.

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