

Home Mission Briefing

'Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.' Cardinal John Henry Newman

A monthly news roundup for the Catholic community in England and Wales

April 2010

DIOCESE:

Hexham and Newcastle Diocese has a substantial evangelisation section on its website. See its' resources, top tips, latest newsletter, dedicated RCIA and enquiry area: http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/becoming_a_catholic/becoming_a_catholic_2.php

INITIATIVE:

The Seekers' Centre at the Franciscan Friary in North Wales offers a programme of tailor-made events for enquirers: <http://www.life4seekers.co.uk/lifestylevalues/seekers.html>



ENQUIRIES:

Bill emailed the Catholic Enquiry Office this month: 'Myself and my partner have recently had a baby girl who is approaching one month old, and we are keen on her being baptised... we are not active in attending church on a regular basis.'

(Name changed to protect privacy)

TECHNOLOGY:

Mobile phones are increasingly becoming a primary tool of evangelisation. Gradually Catholic applications are being made available. For an insight into what's currently on offer for the iPhone see: [http://](http://electjeff.wordpress.com/2009/07/04/the-catholic-iphone-list/)

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ECUMENISM:

How is technology impacting on mission?

Encounters online magazine offers some ecumenical perspectives: <http://www.redcliffe.org/standard.asp?id=6085&cachefixer=cf93246104298575>

Proclaim the Merciful Love of God

Speaking on Divine Mercy Sunday (11th April 2010), Pope Benedict said from Castelgandolfo:

'The pages of the Gospel of Saint John (20:19-31) are full of divine mercy and goodness. It is told that Jesus, after the Resurrection, visited his disciples, crossing the closed doors of the house.'

He continued: 'Jesus shows the signs of the passion, allowing the doubting Thomas to touch them. However, how is it possible that a disciple doubts? In reality, divine condescendence allows us to draw even from the incredulity of Saint Thomas as well as from the believing disciples. In fact, touching the Lord's wounds, the hesitant disciple heals not only his own diffidence, but also ours.'

The visit by the Risen One, the Pope explained, "is not limited to the house, but it goes beyond, so that all may receive the gift of peace and life with the "creating Breath". In fact, twice Jesus said to the disciples: "Peace be with you!", and added: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." After saying this he breathed on them, saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

'This is the mission of the Church constantly assisted by the Paraclete: to bring to all the good news, the joyous reality of God's merciful Love, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you will receive life in his name.'



'In the light of these words, I encourage, in particular, all the Shepherds to follow the example of the holy Cure of Ars who, at his time, knew how to transform the hearts and lives of so many persons, because he made them perceive the merciful love of the Lord. Today, we also need a similar proclamation and a similar testimonial of the truth of Love. In this way we make Him that our eyes have never seen be evermore familiar and close, He whose infinite Mercy is an absolute certitude,' the Pope concluded.

www.zenit.org/english
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Papal Visit Theme Shapes Home Mission

The soon-to-be beatified Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890) chose ‘heart speaks unto heart’ as the motto to go on his coat of arms when he became a Cardinal in 1879. At the time, Newman thought these words came from the Imitation of Christ (written in the 1400s), but in fact he was mistaken – they’re from St. Francis de Sales (1567 – 1622), a French Bishop and great spiritual writer whom Newman revered.

‘Heart speaks to heart’ is the theme of the forthcoming Papal Visit and can be unpacked in many different ways; at its simplest level it’s a phrase that invites us to make time to be with God in prayer.

Our prayers bear fruit in our lives through our every day actions. As Christians, people notice what we do and don’t do. The example of deep and authentic faith in ordinary Catholics who are just trying to love God in the best way they can, going to church, trying to be kind, patient, forgiving, whilst not always succeeding, should make us stand out. This day-to-day decision to choose the Christian way will gently influence those around us. People recognise goodness and virtue even if they don’t necessarily have the vocabulary to call it that. Perhaps bring to mind someone now who influenced you in your own life, who loved you, who accepted and listened to you, who spoke to your heart? You and I in our time are now called to do the same. With the eyes of the world on the Catholic community before and after the Pope’s visit, now is the time to reach out as home missionaries.

Clare Ward
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(The full text of this article is in **The Universe** newspaper, 30th April 2010.)



Resources in support of the Papal Visit will be published online over the summer months. See: www.thepapalvisit.org.uk

Archbishop Nichols and Home Mission



The Papal Visit is a mission and to support Catholics to prepare for it, Archbishop Vincent Nichols recently recorded a video message which was produced by the

Home Mission Desk.

In it he says: ‘It’s hard to express the sense of joy and excitement. It is in fact the first time that any Pope has been invited here by Her Majesty, the Queen, and by her government so this is a deeply significant moment for the country as whole and of course for the Catholic community... I hope it will show the Catholic community as being a real contributor to the well-being of this nation and the message of the Catholic faith as being one that is of health, good life and real depth of virtue.... Catholics can support this mission of the Pope obviously by being there, by wanting to be there with him, by greeting and praying with him, but also be showing it in the way that we do everything and the joy that comes with our faith.’

To view the full interview please see: <http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/News-and-Media/Video/Archbishop-Nichols-on-the-Pope-s-UK-visit> Interviews have also been recorded with Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor and Archbishop Peter Smith.

Street Pastors



A number of Catholic dioceses in England and Wales are involved in the

Street Pastors mission. This is an inter-denominational Church response to urban problems, engaging with people on the streets to care, listen and dialogue. The aim is to communicate to people that the Church is there for people in a practical way. Each Street Pastor team works a minimum of one night a month, usually from 10pm to around 4am: <http://www.streetpastors.co.uk/>

Catholic Enquiry Office



For over fifty years the Catholic Enquiry Office has provided a free question and answer service to non Catholic enquirers. Managed by the Catholic Communications Network the Office exists to:

- 1) Stimulate interest in Catholic life and beliefs
- 2) Promote a better understanding of the Catholic Church
- 3) Respond to enquirers

At the invitation of the Bishops of England and Wales the Office team was invited to give the work an online expression. This has been done through www.life4seekers.co.uk which attempts to offer a very basic starting point for those who have no faith background at all. Please do help to publicise that this service is available by perhaps putting a link on your diocesan, parish or personal website.

Research: Preaching Popularity

Research done at Durham University showed that 96.6% of those Christians surveyed ‘look forward’ to the sermon, with 60% saying it gave them a sense of God’s love. Roman Catholics were most keen on sermons that educated rather than challenged them. They also wanted homilies to be completed within ten minutes. Full story: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/fair/article6993099.ece>

Evangelisation Summer School

A summer school is being offered in Milton Keynes, 27th - 30th July 2010 themed, ‘A Missionary Church’. The non-residential event will explore the missionary nature of the Church and its implications for pastoral work today. The sessions would be useful for anyone who is seeking to grow in and share the gift of faith. They would also benefit those who are interested in, or currently involved in catechesis, evangelisation, RCIA or any form of Christian formation or leadership.

For more information and a booking form please see: www.catholicchurch.org.uk/catholic_church/events