

Image taken at the Easter Vigil,
Westminster Cathedral
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Home Mission Briefing

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

April 2011

DIOCESE:

Educate and Evangelise - Clifton Diocese's Department for Adult Education and Evangelisation's new newsletter is now online: <http://www.cliftondiocese.com/assets/files/pdf/2011/march/adultednewslettermar11.pdf>



INITIATIVE:

International Symposium on John Paul II's Theology of the Body (this teaching is a wonderful tool of evangelisation), 3rd-5th June 2011 at St Mary's University College Twickenham. www.smuc.ac.uk/tob-conference

ENQUIRERS:

Jack recently contacted the Catholic Enquiry Office to ask: 'Please explain to me about assumption of Mary.' The CEO website address is: <http://www.life4seekers.co.uk>



STAGE & SCREEN

Congratulations to the Catholic Stage Guild which is celebrating its centenary year. Past members have included Sr Alec Guinness, Peter Finch and Cyril Cusack. <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=18090>

ECUMENISM

Kristos ChurchInsight, a Division of Premier Media Group, specialises in supporting churches and organisations to evangelise on the internet using the latest technology. Please see: www.kristoschurchinsight.com

Resurrection, Reason & Creation

Faith in God and in the events of salvation history must necessarily begin with a belief in God's role as Creator, said Pope Benedict XVI in his Easter Vigil Homily.

Speaking at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the Pope asked, 'Is it really important to speak also of creation during the Easter Vigil? Could we not begin with the events in which God calls man, forms a people for himself and creates his history with men upon the earth?'

'The answer has to be no,' he stated. 'To omit the creation would be to misunderstand the very history of God with men, to diminish it, to lose sight of its true order of greatness.'

'The sweep of history established by

God reaches back to the origins, back to creation,' the Holy Father explained. 'Our profession of faith begins with the words: "We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." If we omit the beginning of the Credo, the whole history of salvation becomes too limited and too small.'

Pope Benedict affirmed that the central message of the creation account in Scripture was summed up best by St. John in the opening words of his Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word.'

'The world is a product of the Word,' the Pope stated, 'of the Logos, as St. John expresses it. [...] "Logos" means



"reason," "sense," "word." It is not reason pure and simple, but creative Reason, that speaks and communicates itself. It is Reason that both is and creates sense.'

'The creation account tells us, then, that the world is a product of creative Reason,' he continued. 'Hence it tells us that, far from there being an absence of reason and freedom at the origin of all things, the source of everything is creative Reason, love, and freedom.'

As a result, the Holy Father explained that the creation account of Scripture and St. John's Gospel affirm 'that in the beginning is reason,' and that mankind was not the product of random evolution 'in the expanding universe, at a late stage, in some tiny corner of the cosmos.'

Speaking of Easter, Benedict XVI said, 'the world had changed': 'We celebrate this day as the origin and the goal of our existence. We celebrate it because now, thanks to the risen Lord, it is definitively established that reason is stronger than unreason, truth stronger than lies, love stronger than death.'

Full text: www.zenit.org/article-28850?l=english

Pope John Paul II's Beatification

In Pope John Paul II's encyclicals, speeches and other writings we repeatedly find the term 'new evangelisation'. The late Holy Father invited the universal Church to embrace this activity as one that is 'new in ardour, new in its methods, and new in its means of expression.' Encouraging all baptised Catholics to explore new ways of proclaiming the Gospel was at the heart of his pontificate and this is one of the reasons why his beatification should excite, in particular, those of us who are already committed to furthering home mission.

On May 1, 2011, the man who canonized more saints than any other pope in modern history will be one step closer to sainthood himself when he becomes 'Blessed John Paul II.' He has left a legacy of teaching that provides inspiration for those seeking to reach out to people with the message of Jesus Christ. Papal Encyclicals Online collates his written work if you would like to better familiarise yourself with his teaching: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/JP02/index.htm>

To celebrate Pope John Paul II's beatification a theatre group at the Oxford Oratory is presenting a play about a mysterious meeting between a man resembling the young Karol Wojtyla, and a group of young hikers, on a pilgrimage: <http://secondspring.yuku.com/topic/948> It may also be timely to consider in your own parish how you might mark this historic event. Some may choose to form a sharing and study group, for others it might be timely to include a series of extracts from his writings or simply an intercessory prayer in the parish newsletter.

Pope Benedict XVI has affirmed repeatedly the importance of the life and teaching of John Paul II. As Cardinal Ratzinger he addressed Catechists and Religion Teachers (2000) saying: 'New evangelisation means... to dare, once again and with the humility of the small grain, to leave up to God the when and how it will grow (Mark 4:26-29). Large things always begin from the small seed.' May the seeds we all scatter in the days ahead reap many fruits for the mission of the Church in England and Wales. Blessed John Paul II, pray for us.

Clare Ward, Home Mission Advisor

Royal Wedding



<http://www.lux-limo.co.uk/>

Archbishop Bernard Longley used the occasion of the annual Easter Monday Men's Mass, at the Metropolitan Cathedral and Basilica of St Chad, Birmingham, to emphasise that the Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton offers an opportunity for people to learn again the values that underpin Christian marriage.

He said: 'The family is central to the life of the Church and it is the building-block of our society. The family's well-being and its ability to provide a stable foundation for life are also central to the well-being of the society in which we live. It has an influence on the quality of the contribution that we can make to commercial and civic life.' See: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=18126>

Meanwhile, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has released a prayer for use around the time of the Royal Wedding: http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Media-Centre/press_releases/Press-Releases-2011/Prayer-for-the-Royal-Wedding A group of Dominican sisters has pledged to pray especially for the the future happiness of the couple who are to marry on the day that is traditionally set aside to celebrate the feast day of St Catherine of Siena. One of the sisters will provide material for a mini-retreat on Twitter for the two weeks following the wedding: http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Media-Centre/press_releases/Press-Releases-2011/Dominican-Sisters-Pray-For-Royal-Couple

Testimony of Faith

Ahead of the Easter weekend, Rt Rev Michael Evans, Bishop of East Anglia, spoke movingly about living with a terminal illness and his final journey to God. He said: 'My message... is the message of the Good News of the Gospel, that we go through death to resurrection, that if there is pain we go through that to something even better and therefore there is a way forward.'

The interview can be viewed at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-13145354>

Radio Roadshow

The Catholic Radio Roadshow Team - Heart Speaks Unto Heart - has confirmed 20 dates in cathedrals and cities throughout England. The Roadshow will showcase Catholic artistic talent (musical and artistic), promote Heart Gives Unto Heart Catholic Internet Radio and the profits will be used to establish the Radio long-term.

The day programme includes Mass, an exhibition of Catholic artistic talent including over 200 works of art from Catholic students, a display of Christian icons and an exclusive collection of photos from the Papal Visit. During the afternoons there are a series of free workshops for parishioners, including: '12 steps to fulfill the potential of the Parish Repository and Parish Events'; 'Debt Counselling as a service in your Parish'; and 'How to Run a Soup Kitchen'. A free Souvenir Newspaper will be available for visitors. See: <http://hguhroadshow.co.uk/default.aspx>

Longer Lives

Increased life expectancy is leading to people 'putting off' becoming involved in religion, UK researchers have said. A paper in the International Journal of Social Economics suggests decisions about 'religiosity' depend on perceived social and spiritual benefits.

As people live longer, younger people are less concerned about what happens after death. Full story: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-13011509>



Society of Jesus

180 Jesuits and 40 of their colleagues in schools, colleges, spirituality centres and pastoral work met recently for the biennial meeting of the British Province of the Society of Jesus.

The theme of the meeting was 'On Mission for the Life of the World', which gave speakers broad scope to address such issues as how religious life can be at the service of the Church and its mission, as well as its role in serving all sectors of society, especially the elderly and the vulnerable. See: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?>