



## Home Mission Sunday Homily Notes

One year ago we celebrated the historic visit of Pope Benedict XVI to our shores. We can all probably recall at least one favourite moment whether we attended an event or watched it on the television or on the internet. We know that the visit blessed us as a Catholic community, and we know that it blessed the Holy Father too; when he returned to Rome he is reported to have said that it had given him fresh wind in his sails. The phrase, 'fresh wind in our sails', is the chosen theme for Home Mission Sunday which the Bishops of England and Wales invite the Catholic community to celebrate today.

But what does 'fresh wind in our sails' mean? It means that we, led by the example of the Holy Father, are invited to respond to the call to holiness afresh, we are invited to grow in openness to the Holy Spirit who wants to sustain us throughout our lives, in all its struggles and joys. We are invited to seek new ways of sharing the joy of our faith every day.

In the Holy Father's, Address to Pupils on 17 September last year, he said: 'I hope that among those of you listening to me today there are some of the future saints of the twenty-first century. What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever begin to imagine, and he wants the very best for you. And by far the best thing for you is to grow in holiness.' Pope Benedict XVI went on to say: '...true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts.'

Today's readings encourage us to choose God afresh in our lives, to seek to follow His ways. This ongoing choice for God over ourselves is our response to the call to holiness that the Pope placed before us last year, that the Church has placed before us for the last two thousand years, that Jesus placed before us during his earthly ministry, and that He continues to place before us, as His Spirit speaks to our hearts and through the Church today.

As we grow in holiness we are allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us how to fulfil the Great Commandment of Jesus, to love the Lord our God, and our neighbour as ourselves. We love God and our neighbour in many ways, central to which is committing to pray each day and to meeting with others in their needs. These needs present themselves in different ways - physical, emotional and spiritual, among

others. In giving witness to the love of God, we are asked to support them practically, to pray for them and to share our faith with them, introducing them to the person of Jesus, that he might bring fresh wind to their sails too.

Today, on Home Mission Sunday, let's firstly remember in prayer Bishops as they prepare to gather at three o'clock to give thanks for the Papal Visit. Secondly, let's also reflect on what Jesus is calling us to do in our time in service of mission in England and Wales. Please contribute to the annual collection which is vital to the mission in our nation. Let's also pray for ourselves, and all those involved in the mission of evangelisation here in England and Wales, that we may be people of holiness, faithful witnesses to our faith in Jesus, among our families, in our workplaces and among our friends. May the Lord, in his great love, place 'fresh wind in our sails' for our life and mission as the Church today, enabling us to grow in holiness to be the "saints of the twenty first century."

Written by Fr Simon Penhalagan, President of the Sion Catholic Community for Evangelism