



Papal Visit Legacy Material

Pentecost Papal Reminder To 'Let his Light Shine

Eight months since the Papal Visit to the UK and the Holy Father's words continue to shape and renew mission in England and Wales, not least as we prepare to celebrate Pentecost on 12th June. What is our personal and parish response to his words and to this Solemnity?

At the Prayer Vigil in Hyde Park Pope Benedict said: 'By letting the light of faith shine in our hearts, and by abiding in that light through our daily union with the Lord in prayer and participation in the life-giving sacraments of the Church, we ourselves become light to those around us... without even knowing it, we draw people one step closer to the Lord and his truth.' (18th September 2010)

Repeatedly when I meet with parish representatives and members of Catholic groups, they express perplexity about what 'evangelisation' means and how to do. The task is nearly always understood as being complex requiring the implementation of ongoing cycles of mission programmes, courses and processes. Whilst these things can very helpfully assist our efforts, the Holy Father reminded us during his visit to the UK that our primary concern is to be renewed in responding to the call to holiness, in growing in our 'heart to heart' relationship with the God who loves and forgives us. As a fruit of that spiritual intimacy His light will shine through us in the way we are, through our words and actions, drawing others to Himself: It isn't complicated.

Pentecost reminds us that the Church exists and was born for a missionary purpose. In Acts of Apostles (2:1-11) we read that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples to give them the gifts that they would need to proclaim the Gospel. The gifts given were for the whole Church and for the common good, made manifest in the lives of individuals and in the life of the Christian community. We know that this experience renewed them in their baptismal calling and was powerful and transforming.

On June 12th so it can be for us too if we're willing, as the theme of the Papal Visit suggested, to allow the Lord to speak to us 'heart speaking until heart'. This doesn't mean that in response we have to necessarily get busy organizing big events and displays (if this is your gift then certainly share it) but for most of us we

will receive again the call to simply open our hearts to the Lord, to grow in our relationship with him and in turn to seek to share that experience as opportunities present themselves.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols (Westminster) wrote in a Pastoral Letter shortly after the Papal Visit: 'With the blessings of this Visit we can be more confident in our faith and more ready to speak it and let it be seen each day... Even the simple step of more regularly using the greeting "God bless you", gently and naturally, would make a difference to the tone we set in our daily lives as would the more frequent use of the Sign of the Cross. Making faith visible is so much a part of the invitation the Holy Father has extended to us all.' (25th - 26th September 2010)

Perhaps therefore consider in these days leading up to Pentecost what your response to these words is - the call to holiness and to make faith visible. Blessed Newman understood that if you open your heart to the Holy Spirit He will give you the strength to witness to Jesus. Also perhaps consider one way in which you can make your faith seen and heard everyday, remembering as we read in John's Gospel that, as the Father sent Him, so too are we sent, that we have nothing to fear because the Holy Spirit is with us. (John 20: 19 - 23)

In support of the legacy of the Papal Visit a Parish Mission Commissioning liturgy to be used on or around Pentecost is available on the Bishops' Conference website, along with other resources. Please see: <http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Home-Mission>

Also, if you've begun something new or been renewed in an existing ministry as a fruit of the Papal Visit you are invited to contact the Home Mission Desk to share this good news detailing what you've done, why, who is involved, when does it happen, where and how. Your sharing should be no more than one side of A4 paper please. A selection of these initiatives will be published online. Email: Clare.Ward@cbcew.org.uk

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