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Date as postmark

Dear Friend,

Word of the Lord Conference – Durham, 24-26 April, 2013

I am writing to let you know about the forthcoming 'Word of the Lord' Conference, which has as its focus celebrating the gift of the Scriptures at the heart of the Church in England and Wales.

In this Year of Faith, this unique gathering in Durham will provide an opportunity for Catholics to gather from around the country to reflect prayerfully on how we as a community are engaging with the Bible. It will also offer a space to explore questions about how we can use the Bible more effectively in service of the Church's mission.

The conference aims to bring together individuals from across the Catholic community to share resources and ideas, to grow in understanding, and to identify ideas for new ways in which we can celebrate the gift of Scripture in the life of the Church in our countries.

As such, the 'Word of the Lord' Conference will focus on three themes recently highlighted in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini*:

- 'The Word of the Lord' – Catholic Biblical Theology and how we understand the role and significance of the Scriptures in our lives
- 'The Word in the Church' – how the Scriptures are celebrated, understood and lived out in the life and worship of the Catholic community
- 'The Word for the World' – exploring how we share the gift of the Scriptures with others outside the Catholic community, through works of evangelisation, service, witness and dialogue.

The conference is an initiative of the Scripture Working Group (chaired by Fr Adrian Graffy), which is an instrument of the Bishops' Conference Department for Evangelisation and is being organised in partnership with Bible Society and the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University.

Alongside members of the Working Group, we are delighted to be welcoming some excellent guest speakers, including:

- Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP – former Master of the Order of Preachers, well-known author and international speaker.

- Michelle Moran – member of the Pontifical Council for Laity and observer to the Synod on the Word; President of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services
- Dom Henry Wansbrough – General Editor of the New Jerusalem Bible, former member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and well-known author

The conference, however, won't simply be focused on listening to input – your contribution will be highly valued, and we will be facilitating time for group discussions as well as workshops and liturgical celebrations. On the attached sheet, you will find further information about the event, as well as a preliminary booking form to reserve your place. There is only limited availability at the conference, so I do urge you to book early in order to guarantee your attendance (and a reduced conference fee).

In his recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict XVI writes that the Synod on the Word of God:

'called for a particular pastoral commitment to emphasising the centrality of the word of God in the Church's life, and recommended a greater "biblical apostolate," not alongside other forms of pastoral work, but as a means of letting the Bible inspire all pastoral work.' *Verbum Domini* § 73

It is my hope and prayer that this unique opportunity will be a moment of grace for us as a Catholic community to develop the biblical apostolate here in England and Wales.

With best wishes and God bless you,

Kieran Conry

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