



HOME MISSION SUNDAY

Theme: Evangelisation 'in the heart of the family'

Supporting ministry and outreach to non churchgoing (lapsed) Catholics

Dear Sisters, Fathers and Brothers,

URGENCY OF THE TASK

"Many children and young people today will never see their parents receive the sacraments," we are reminded in the preparatory document for the forthcoming Synod on the Family. I'm sure, like me, you have repeatedly observed this to be the case, with research suggesting that an estimated 80% of Catholics in England and Wales rarely or never attend Mass.

A CALL TO MISSION

On 21 September 2014 the Bishops of England and Wales invite parishes and religious houses to celebrate *Home Mission Sunday* to encourage every massgoing Catholic to respond urgently to the call to evangelise. With most massgoing Catholics feeling the pain and sorrow caused by a large number of family members and friends not practising their faith, there is an urgency for us all to consider afresh how we might respectfully and joyfully **reach out to our absent brothers and sisters in Christ**. Thank you for all that you are already doing in this regard.

HELPFUL AND FREE RESOURCES IN PRINT AND ONLINE

Free promotional cards about Home Mission Sunday have been sent to your community for distribution and are accompanied by additional materials online at www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms14. The free materials include: homily notes, bidding prayers, a newsletter notice, testimonies and video materials. Please do use the Sunday to encourage, as Pope Francis has urged, the beginning of a 'new chapter of evangelisation,' through inviting prayer for evangelisation and encouraging community members to be renewed in their outreach activities.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT PLEASE

The Bishops ask that the Sunday is promoted within every parish and religious house, and that, if your community runs a parish, a mandatory second collection is taken on 21 September in support of the Bishops' work of Home Mission please. The funds raised directly support the work of the Bishops' Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis, served by one full-time Home Mission staff member. Your community's generosity has already helped us, with partners, to take significant steps in support of this area of ministry and outreach – for an overview of the extensive work being done please visit the web address above – but there is so much more we could do if we had the financial backing. More people would return to the practice of their faith if we had additional resources to reach out to them.

THANK YOU

As one of three mandatory collections requested by the Bishops each year, this will help us to develop new resources, pathways and strategies to serve and reach out to the millions who are no longer active in the heart of the parish family. We all know someone dear to us who is distant from the life of faith, and as 21 September approaches, thank you in advance for your support of this vital ministry and work.

With thanks and God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kieran Conry".

Bishop Kieran Conry,
Chair, Bishops' Conference Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis

INSIDE THIS PACKAGE YOU SHOULD FIND:

- Cover letter from Bishop Kieran Conry
- Home Mission Sunday materials for distribution on 21 September 2014 please
- Suggested newsletter insert and liturgical materials
- Guidance note about what to do with the second collection please

SUGGESTED NEWSLETTER INSERT AND WEBSITE NOTICE

Please kindly assist us by promoting *Home Mission Sunday* in your community (and parish) newsletter, website and in any notices which you announce at Sunday Mass. You may find the following draft paragraph useful; it can be adapted for use in your community, the weekend before, and on the weekend of the celebration. The money raised makes possible the Bishops' work of evangelisation nationally.

HOME MISSION SUNDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2014

Supporting outreach to non churchgoing (lapsed) Catholics

This year's theme: Evangelisation 'in the heart of the family'

Many children and young people will never see their parents receive the sacraments. Every Catholic who goes to Mass knows someone who currently is distant from the family of the faith - the parish community. On 21 September 2014 the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales ask that Home Mission Sunday is celebrated in every parish to invite prayer and support for the work of evangelisation. Please pray for and help the Bishops to develop new ways to reach out to non churchgoing (lapsed) Catholics by supporting the second collection. For more information, free resources and to donate online: www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms14 #hms14 Thank you for your support and do pick up a free prayer and information card about Home Mission Sunday as you leave church on 21 September.

INVITATION TO USE THE SUNDAY AS A PLATFORM FOR YOUR GOOD WORK

You may also choose to use Home Mission Sunday as a platform for your own community's evangelisation activities and / or perhaps commission a team to take the lead in planning outreach in the year ahead? Please contact your diocesan evangelisation staff (office), or the Bishops' Home Mission Desk, if you'd like to talk through ideas about starting a team. Email: Clare.Ward@cbcew.org.uk

COLLECTION REMITTANCE PLEASE

The total amount collected in your parish (if your community runs one) for *Home Mission Sunday* should be sent to your Diocesan Finance Office, according to the procedures applicable in your diocese please. It should be clearly identified as having been collected for 'Home Mission Sunday 2014'. Each Diocesan Finance Office will then forward the cumulative sum to the Bishops' Conference – Secretariat. Please do not send money directly from your parish to the Bishops' Conference - Secretariat.

If parishioners wish to make a donation by cheque, please kindly ask them to make cheques payable to your parish. These can then be paid-in and accounted for on your parish weekly income record as a donation to a second collection and incorporated within the total sum. We also have an online donate facility at: www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms14 For legacies left to benefit the work of Home Mission, please contact the Bishops' Conference fundraiser: Matt.Feeley@cbcew.org.uk Any support that your community is able to give is greatly appreciated.

Thank you and God bless you.

Home Mission Sunday is resourced, with partners, by the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Desk in service of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. Email: homemission@cbcew.org.uk

For information about the Bishops' work of Home Mission please see: www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms14

For information about the work being done in support of marriage and family life please see: www.cbcew.org.uk/mfl

INTRODUCTION TO MASS

Today is Home Mission Sunday – the day annually when we are invited to pray for and support the Church's work of Evangelisation in England and Wales. The theme this year is *Evangelisation 'in the heart of the family'*. We are reminded that the work of evangelisation begins within our own families - in our own homes - and also within the spiritual family of our parish. As we listen to today's Scripture readings during Mass, the Bishops ask that we reflect very especially on how the Lord might be calling us to reach out to those that we know, in our home and parish family, who are non churchgoing (lapsed) Catholics.

HOMILY NOTES

1) MYSELF

'Charity begins at home' they say. So does evangelisation. We have to start with oneself: yourself, myself. As Baptised Christians we evangelise best by our witness in our daily lives: generously helping someone in need, for example, or not drinking alcohol in Lent when you go out with workmates to the pub on a Friday, or a teenager having the courage to come to Mass on a Sunday despite his or her friends' mockery.

To do this we have to renew our own conversion constantly. As Pope Francis says, "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ ... The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk" (*Evangelii Gaudium* 3). So take some time to reflect on your relationship with Christ. Do you devote time to prayer? Is your lifestyle "worthy of the Gospel of Christ" (Second Reading)? Do you witness daily to Christ, in big things or in small things?

2) THE FAMILY

Secondly, we need to reflect on our family life. We would all agree with Pope Francis that "the family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis" (*EG* 66).

Every Christian family should try to follow two models: the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and the Holy Trinity. The Holy Family had its difficulties - persecution by King Herod, losing Jesus aged 12, etc. - but despite them Mary, Joseph and Jesus loved one another and each tried to follow God's will for them. The Holy Trinity is three persons, bound together in love, and this same unity in love should be displayed at the heart of the Christian family.

So, parents: how do you pass on the faith to your children, and are you transmitting God's values to them? Children: what do you do to help, not obstruct, family life? What can you do to make the world a better place? Everyone: how can we overcome our difficulties, and show love and joy? As members of a family we evangelise best by our witness in our daily lives: coming to Mass every Sunday as a family, praying together as a family, working together as a family, like the workers in the parable, for the kingdom of God.

3) THE PARISH [OR CHAPLAINCY]

Thirdly, we need to reflect on the life of the family which is our parish. "The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers" (*EG* 28).

As a parish we evangelise best by our witness in our daily lives: [here the preacher might mention good local examples of social outreach, of mission, of parish groups, schools, etc.]. Above all, is this parish as welcoming as the landowner in the parable? And if the parish were to suddenly disappear, would the local community notice?

4) NON CHURCHGOING CATHOLICS: LAPSED

Fourthly, we are called to reach out to "the baptised whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith" (*EG* 15).

"Many children and young people today will never see their parents receive the sacraments," we are reminded in the preparatory document for the forthcoming Synod on the Family in Rome. Research suggests that an estimated 80% of Catholics in England and Wales rarely or never attend Mass. Again, we evangelise best by our witness in our daily lives. Instead of being judgemental like the grumblers in the parable, we do better to try to find out why they are not participating in the community of faith, to find ways of attracting them back to the practice of the faith, and to be welcoming when they do return. Reaching out to members absent from the heart of the parish family is a key focus of this Home Mission Sunday. People do re-connect, they do come back, if invited.

MATERIALS TO GIFT NON CHURCHGOING (LAPSED) CATHOLICS: NEW DISCOUNTED AND SPECIAL EDITION 'INVITATION PACK'

The Catholic Truth Society, in partnership with the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Desk, has created a special 'Invitation Pack' to encourage and give parishioners the confidence to evangelise. These resources are designed to be given to non churchgoing Catholics and include the following booklets: *Gospel of Mark*, *A New Companion to Prayer* and *25 Tough Questions on the Catholic Faith*. CTS is offering the pack at a 15% discount in support of parish evangelisation and it costs £5.95 excl. postage*. Order 9 or more packs for free postage. To order please contact the CTS on **020 7640 0042** or **orders@ctsbooks.org** or go to **www.ctsbooks.org**. (Home Mission Invitation Pack code: HMIP1)



*Postage:
£3.95 for orders
of between
1-8 packs.

Homily notes continued...

CONCLUSION

So four ways of responding to today's Gospel – in our lives, in our families, in our parishes and by reaching out to non churchgoing Catholics. We have to be like the workers in the parable in today's Gospel. We have to allow ourselves to be called by God to whatever acts of witness he wants from us. Pope Francis: evangelisation "is first and foremost the Lord's work, surpassing anything we can see and understand ... In every activity of evangelisation, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to co-operate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit" (EG 12).

FOR THE NOTICES

The Bishops of England and Wales ask that every parish prays for the work of Home Mission (evangelisation) today. The second collection is to support the development of new ways of reaching out to the estimated 4 million non churchgoing (lapsed) Catholics. Please be as generous as you can. The collection enables the Bishops to pursue a breadth of projects in service of Home Mission – websites, outreach projects, research initiatives, campaign materials, and much more. Please do pick up the free Home Mission Sunday postcard as you leave church today. Your support through prayer, and generous giving, will make a difference to people's lives.

SUGGESTED INCLUSIONS FOR THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL (BIDDING PRAYERS)

- For Francis our Pope, *N* our Bishop, and everyone in our diocese, and for the work done nationally in support of evangelisation: that we may respond on this Home Mission Sunday to Christ's call and spread the Gospel with joy.
- For our parish, especially for the Baptised who no longer or rarely attend Church: that our witness of transfigured lives in Christ will draw more people into an active participation in our parish.

These liturgical resources were written by Fr David Gibbons, Director of the Archdiocese of Southwark Centre for Catholic Formation in Tooting Bec. **www.ccftootingbec.org.uk**

Home Mission Sunday is resourced by the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Desk in service of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. Email: **homemission@cbcew.org.uk**

NEW NATIONAL EVANGELISATION INITIATIVE IN 2015 TO BENEFIT YOUR PARISH THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL: PRACTICAL RESOURCES

The Bishops of England and Wales have given their support to a significant new evangelisation initiative. Inspired by Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, there are four ways to get involved:

- 1) Using themed small group materials in parishes - ready for January 2015.
- 2) National Catholic Evangelisation Conference - Birmingham, 11 July 2015 - explore sending a representative.
A quota of places has been given to each diocese.
- 3) Parish Prayer Vigil invitation - 11 July 2015 - join this national network of prayer.
- 4) Evangelisation events in dioceses - come along!

Find out more at: **www.catholicnews.org.uk/gospeljoy** Tel. **0207 9014816** Email: **gospeljoy@cbcew.org.uk**