

# Home Mission Briefing

**‘Then Simon Peter spoke up and said, “You are Christ, the Son of the living God.”’**  
*Gospel for the Feast of the Chair of St Peter, 22 February, Matthew 16: 16 - 17*

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

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## DIocese:

Lancaster Diocese has launched a new website which offers a comprehensive section on the Catholic Faith and issues an invitation to non churchgoing Catholics to return home: <http://www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/>



## INITIATIVE:

**CHANGED:** *God transforming lives today* offers six short faith stories on an audio CD. It has been produced by CaFE (Catholic Evangelisation Services). Also just out *Dare to Believe: Seven Keys To Knowing God Better*: <http://www.faithcafe.org/>

## MEDIA:

**Confession:** A Roman Catholic (phone) App has been launched to support those who frequent the sacrament and those who wish to return: <http://www.zenit.org/article-31640?l=english>



## ECUMENISM:

[www.pubchurch.co.uk/](http://www.pubchurch.co.uk/) exists to encourage groups to gather in pubs to explore the Christian faith. The accompanying website aims to provide support, resources and an outreach network.



## Dialogue with non believers

**A Vatican communiqué has announced the launch of the ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles’ as a new permanent Vatican structure to promote dialogue and encounter between believers and nonbelievers.**

This new institution will be inaugurated with three colloquia in Paris on the theme ‘Religion, Enlightenment, Common Reason.’ The first colloquium will be held on 24 March at the headquarters of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The next morning, another will take place at the Sorbonne. Then, on the afternoon of 25 March, the third will be held at the Institut de France.

The idea for this initiative was proposed in a 21 December, 2009, address by the Pope to the Roman Curia, in which he spoke about the ‘Court of the Gentiles,’ a space in the ancient Temple of Jerusalem that was not reserved for the Jews, but rather was open to any person independent of his culture or religion.

The Pontiff noted that Jesus, in the Gospel, cleared this temple courtyard



of extraneous affairs ‘so that it could be a free space for the Gentiles who wished to pray there to the one God, even if they could not take part in the mystery for whose service the inner part of the Temple was reserved.’

The Holy Father noted: ‘He was thinking of people who know God, so to speak, only from afar; who are dissatisfied with their own gods, rites and myths; who desire the Pure and the Great, even if God remains for them the “unknown God.”.. I think that today too the Church should open a sort of “Court of the Gentiles” in which people might in some

way latch on to God, without knowing him and before gaining access to his mystery, at whose service the inner life of the Church stands.’

He continued: ‘Today, in addition to interreligious dialogue, there should be a dialogue with those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown.’

Text source: <http://www.zenit.org/article-31575?l=english>



## Angels & Mission



*'This year's survey of British beliefs by Bible Society and Christian Research found that one in three Brits believe in angels. The annual research revealed that 31 per cent agree that angels exist and 29 per cent believe a guardian angel*

*watches over them. The pollsters asked 1,038 Britons and found that women are twice as likely to believe as men. There is also a geographical variation, with Scots and people in north-eastern England the least willing to believe, and Londoners the most – at 40 per cent. Age also makes a difference: just 27 per cent of young people between 18 and 24 accept that they have angelic company, while among 45-54 year-olds the number of angel supporters rises to 37 per cent.'*  
Source: <http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/>

*It's interesting to observe when visiting people's homes how often you'll see a statue of an angel on the mantelpiece. It can suggest an openness to, or at least awareness of, things spiritual. I remember helping out at a spirituality fair several years running and one of the stalls, run by Christians, focussed on angels and proved to be extremely popular.*

*The Church teaches that angels help her 'on her earthly pilgrimage and protect every human being'. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 352). It also teaches that '...it is the angels who "evangelise" by proclaiming the Good News of Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection.' (CCC 333) One very small way we can use them to help us in our evangelistic efforts is to have a statue of one (and / or another kind of Catholic statute) in our homes. They can provide unthreatening conversation starters about spirituality and faith. So what's on display on your mantelpiece and what do those items communicate to visitors about your faith in God?*



Clare Ward,  
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## Holiness And Love



In his final homily to members of the National Catholic Scout Fellowship, the Bishop of Wrexham, Rt Rev Edwin Regan, invited them to respond to the call to holiness.

'As scouts, you have a marvellous way of choosing to be holy, as Pope Benedict challenged us [during his recent visit]. His Holiness 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.'

Bishop Regan added: 'You have all made a promise – "On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and to the Queen, to help other people, and to keep the Scout Law." ... A scout is to be trusted, and loyal, and friendly and considerate... That's fantastic law – good enough even for a bishop! And it's marvellous when you choose to keep it... I once asked my mother, "Mam, what should I preach about most?" and she thought for a moment, and then said, "Edwin, tell us that God loves us. That is what we need to hear!" And so – never forget it, God loves you all – that is what we need to hear!' Full text: [http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Media-Centre/press\\_releases/Press-Releases-2011/Scouting-bishop-s-farewell-Mass](http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Media-Centre/press_releases/Press-Releases-2011/Scouting-bishop-s-farewell-Mass) Image: <http://scouts.org.uk/>

## Treasures of Heaven

Treasures of Heaven is a forthcoming British Museum Exhibition which will feature objects drawn from church treasuries across Europe (including the Vatican), museums in the USA, and the British Museum's own collection. It will bring together some of the finest sacred treasures of the medieval age, not seen in such significant numbers in the UK since the religious upheaval of the 16th century. Over 150 objects will be on display. There will also be a related events programme, including a conference, lectures, talks and debates. To find out more see: [www.britishmuseum.org/whats\\_on/future\\_exhibitions/treasures\\_of\\_heaven.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/future_exhibitions/treasures_of_heaven.aspx)

## The Way

In April a new film - The Way - will be released which promises to inspire thousands to go on pilgrimage to Compostela.

Martin Sheen, plays Tom, an American doctor who comes to St. Jean Pied de Port, France, to collect the remains of his adult son, killed in the Pyrenees in a storm while walking The Camino de Santiago, also known as The Way of Saint James.

Driven by his profound sadness and desire to understand his son better, Tom decides to embark on the historical pilgrimage, leaving his 'California bubble life' behind.

Premier Christian Radio is the Official Faith Media Partner for the forthcoming release of the new movie and over the coming months will offer updates, clips from the film, the preview trailer and interviews with the cast and crew. See: <http://www.premier.org.uk/features/The%20Way.aspx>

## Catholic Church Growing



The number of baptised Catholics on the planet continues to grow, as has the number of priests and seminarians.

This is some of what can be learned from the data of the 2011 papal yearbook, the Anuario Pontificio, presented to Benedict XVI recently by his secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, and Archbishop Fernando Filoni, undersecretary for general affairs.

The statistical data from the year 2009 show that the number of baptised Catholics has increased from nearly 1.16 billion in 2008 to 1.18 billion in 2009, with an absolute increase of 15 million faithful.

The Catholic population of Europe totals 24% of the world's Catholic population. See: <http://www.zenit.org/article-31803?l=english>

### March Outreach Idea:

Use the greeting 'God bless you' in conversation and in letters and emails.