

Home Mission Briefing

'...Christ continues to send his disciples into the world in order to proclaim the coming of his Kingdom and to bring his peace into the world, beginning house by house, family by family, town by town.'
 Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Bellahouston, 16th September 2010

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

November 2010

DIOCESE:

The *Liverpool Archdiocesan Commission for Evangelisation* has produced four leaflets in support of parish outreach. They cover bereavement, welcoming, the environment and the Scriptures. To request copies see: <http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/index.php?p=45>

INITIATIVE:

ANCHOR is a new six session mini-course. It offers a simple introduction to the fundamentals of the Catholic Faith. See: www.anchoryourfaith.com



ENQUIRIES:

Sarah contacted the Catholic Enquiry Office to ask: 'I am looking at the Catholic Faith having been a Christian for over 45 years. I have experience of the wonders of the Catholic Faith... I would appreciate any advice.'

(Name changed to protect privacy)

MEDIA:

Join thousands of people who are continuing the journey of 'Heart Speaks Unto Heart' on the *Papal Visit Facebook page*. Also see the link to the mobile phone application: www.facebook.com/papalvisit



ECUMENISM:

In support of *Christmas Outreach* a new poster image of an ultrasound scan of Jesus in the womb has been published. It's the brainchild of ChurchAds.net and is the focus of its seasonal campaign. See: www.churchads.net



2012 Key Year For Evangelisation

Pope Benedict XVI has announced the theme for the next general assembly of the Synod of Bishops: The New Evangelisation.

The Pope made the announcement at the closing Mass of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops on 24th October 2010, and repeated it before praying the Angelus at midday with those gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be held in 2012, and will be dedicated to the theme "The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith," the Pontiff said.

The announcement came on the same day that the Middle East Synod ended, which considered the theme "Communion and Witness," but also World Mission Sunday, which is themed "The Building of Ecclesial Communion is the Key to Mission," the Holy Father called attention to the similarities between the themes.

"Both invite us to look upon the Church as a mystery of communion that, by its nature, is destined for the whole person, and to all people," he said.

Quoting Pope Paul VI, the Holy Father added, "The Church exists to evangelise, that is to say, to preach and to teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, to perpetuate the sacrifice of Christ in the Holy Mass, which is the memorial of his death and of his glorious resurrection."

"The missionary task," Benedict XVI reflected, "is not to bring about revolution in the world but to transfigure it, drawing power from Jesus Christ who 'convokes us at the table of his Word and Eucharist, to taste the gift of his Presence, to form ourselves in his school and live more and more consciously united to him, Master and Lord.'"

Text source: <http://www.zenit.org/article-30749?l=english>



Be Not Afraid

'...we always need to hear the Lord Jesus tell us what he often repeated to his friends: "Be not afraid." Like Simon Peter and the others we must allow his presence and his grace to transform our heart, which is always subject to human weakness. We must know how to recognize that losing something, indeed, losing ourselves for the true God, the God of love and of life, is in reality gaining ourselves, finding ourselves more fully. Whoever entrusts himself to Jesus already experiences in this life peace and joy of heart, which the world cannot give, and it cannot even take it away once God has given it to us.

'So it is worthwhile to let ourselves be touched by the fire of the Holy Spirit! The suffering that it causes us is necessary for our transformation. It is the reality of the cross: It is not for nothing that in the language of Jesus "fire" is above all a representation of the cross, without which Christianity does not exist.'

Text source: Pentecost Homily, VATICAN CITY, MAY 23, 2010 (Zenit.org).

Image source: <http://iconception.org/node/23>

New Mission Era

The last year in the life of the Church in the UK has been unprecedented and seen an enormous outpouring of graces. In September and October 2009 the relics of the Patroness of the Missions, St Thérèse of Lisieux, visited our Isles. One year later, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, visited the UK, beatifying Cardinal Newman whilst he was with us. It begs the question, what next for autumn 2011? These events happened not long before the announcement that the Holy Father had created a new Pontifical Council dedicated to the New Evangelisation: Nothing is by coincidence. The Holy Father wrote: '...it is not difficult to see that what all the Churches living in traditionally Christian territories need is a renewed missionary impulse, an expression of a new, generous openness to the gift of grace.'

We mustn't let the grass grow under our feet. We've received many graces as a Catholic Community and we've been given an explicit invitation to be renewed in Home Mission. Three suggested practical responses are:

1) Pray to the Holy Spirit

Daily prayer to the Holy Spirit is central to the life of every Catholic.

2) 'One Step' Programme

Identify one thing that you can do in response to recent events that makes your faith visible or heard in your daily life, that you didn't do before.

3) Christmas Outreach

Begin a conversation in your own family and parish now about how you can reach out to people during Advent and the Christmas season.

Whatever action or activity you choose, know that you've a unique and wonderful part to play in this new mission era.



Clare Ward,
Home Mission Advisor

(For the full text of this article please see: <http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/2010-Visit/The-Legacy-of-the-Pope-s-Visit-to-the-UK-Some-Definite-Purpose>)

Stand Up And Share Faith

Bishop Kieran Conry, Chair of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis for the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has affirmed the right of people to openly share their beliefs.



Speaking in support of Home Mission Sunday he said: 'I would hope the practical legacy of this Home Mission Sunday and the Pope's Visit will be renewal of ourselves, a finding of our confidence as Catholics, our trust in ourselves, our belief in ourselves, and our belief in our capacity and our right to stand up and say, "I believe," even though many people in our society will say, "Keep quiet about that". No, I have a right to stand up and say, "I do believe."'

He added: 'Home Mission Sunday says the first missionary activity must be around myself. We are missionaries to one another, that's the Church's job... The Church's job is mission. It's got to start at home and there are lots of people around us who need mission. We need to be sent out and speak to them and say, "Look. This is what I believe, Can I share it with you?" ... We don't have to say it like that, but somehow that message has got to come across. "This is what I believe, let me share it."'

Home Mission Sunday is celebrated annually on the third Sunday in September. This year it coincided with the Papal Visit. Resources can be sourced from: www.catholicchurch.org.uk/home-mission-sunday-2010

Come Home For Christmas

Come Home For Christmas is an initiative which aims to offer a seasonal welcome to Catholics who for different reasons no longer or rarely attend Mass. Resources are available on www.comehomeforchristmas.co.uk. Outreach leaflets titled, 'Catholic and lost touch?' can be ordered from the Home Mission Desk.



BBC's The Nativity

In the week before Christmas 2010 BBC1 will broadcast *The Nativity*, a dramatic re-telling of the Biblical stories of the birth of Jesus. The series will be shown in peak time and will be seen by many millions of people.

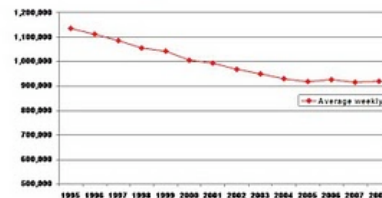
The story focuses on the relationship between Mary and Joseph, and the way they deal with the news of the birth of Jesus. Reviewers have commented that the Gospel accounts have been 'fleshed-out in a moving and thoroughly credible way'.



The broadcast dates will be made public closer to Christmas. The Church and Media Network has produced a briefing sheet with ideas for local churches about what they can do to encourage people to watch the series. It's available for download from: http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/the_bishops_work/Evangelisation

Church Attendance Not In Decline

Roman Catholic Mass Attendance: England & Wales



Source: Roman Catholic Church



'Christian Research has announced that the Church is no longer in decline. Catholic Church attendance has been steady for five years, Church of England attendance steady for almost a decade and the Baptist Union is growing.

'The Catholic Church had seen declining Mass attendance for a decade up to the mid 2000s, but has now stopped that decline and has been holding steady for the past five years.'

'Source: <http://churchmousepublishing.blogspot.com/2010/09/christian-research-church-attendance-in.html>

Pope's Legacy

Over the coming year materials will be offered online to support people in continuing the journey of 'Heart Speaks Unto Heart'. See: <http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/2010-Visit/The-Legacy-of-the-Pope-s-Visit-to-the-UK-Some-Definite-Purpose>