

YEAR OF FAITH

11 October 2012 - 24 November 2013

'Door of faith'

AN INVITATION TO EVERY
CATHOLIC TO REDISCOVER
THE RICHES OF THEIR FAITH
FAITH & REASON

“A Christian may never think of belief as a private act.”

POPE BENEDICT XVI, PORTA FIDEI 10

“No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lampstand where it shines for everyone in the house.”
Mt. 5: 15

A NEW JOURNEY

In October 2011 Pope Benedict XVI announced a ‘**Year of Faith**’ inviting Catholics to rediscover the gift of faith and to seek new ways of proclaiming it.

The Year will begin on 11 October 2012 - the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council - and conclude on 24 November 2013, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King. The start date of 11 October 2012 also marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It coincides too with a gathering of bishops from across the world in Rome for a synod themed, ‘**The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith**’. One of the key emphases of the Year of Faith is to come to know better and deepen our understanding of our greatest treasure.

Everyone is invited to participate in this Year of celebration and mission, mindful that faith is not meant to be private, but professed and shared. Please do support it and get involved as you can.

+ **Bishop Kieran Conry**, Chair, Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis, Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales



The main entrance to the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem



Infant baptism



Bible and rosary

“...the Year of Faith will have to see a concerted effort to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith.”

PORTA FIDEI 11





Pope and pilgrims in Hyde Park, September 2010



VATICAN II

The **'Year of Faith'** will begin on **11 October 2012**, the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. The documents of the Council offer very important teaching in support of the Church's ongoing mission.

It is suggested that you read and study four Constitutions described as the **'pillars of the Council'**. These Constitutions are:

- I. **Lumen Gentium** - on the Church
- II. **Sacrosanctum Concilium** - on the Sacred liturgy
- III. **Dei Verbum** - on Divine Revelation
- IV. **Gaudium et Spes** - on the Church in the Modern World

Pastoral Recommendations-Introduction

One of the repeated themes of Pope Benedict's writings has been the importance of reading and interpreting the documents of Vatican II in the right way, using what he describes as the **'right hermeneutic'**, or interpretation.

The use of a correct interpretive approach is essential to reaching a proper understanding of the Truth in Scripture and in the teaching documents of the Church. This correct approach is sometimes called a **'hermeneutic of continuity'**. This may sound a little complicated, but in simplicity it affirms that a Catholic can only properly understand a Christian teaching if he or she takes into account what both Scripture and the Magisterium have said on a subject. Any understanding which fastens on what Scripture says to the exclusion of the Magisterium (the teaching authority of the Church) or which fastens on this or that statement of the Magisterium in preference to others may be incorrect.

It is possible that your own diocesan website will offer some additional information about the Second Vatican Council. See too the Year of Faith section on the Bishops' Conference website: www.yearoffaith.org.uk

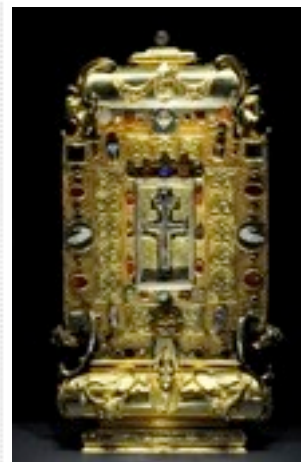
"...if we interpret and implement it [the Council] guided by a right hermeneutic, it can be and can become increasingly powerful for the ever necessary renewal of the Church."

PORTA FIDEI 5





Thanksgiving Mass for the Sacrament of Marriage in Westminster Cathedral



'Treasures of Heaven' Exhibition, British Museum, 2011

CATECHISM

Twenty years ago Blessed Pope John Paul II published the Catechism of the Catholic Church. He wrote at the time: **“...this catechism will make a very important contribution to that work of renewing the whole life of the Church ... I declare it to be a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion and a sure norm for teaching the faith.”** *Fidei Depositum 1, IV*

During the Year of Faith every baptised person is invited to re-read the Catechism to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the most important gift that they've been given - their faith. The Catechism helps everyone to learn about the content of the faith as received and safeguarded by the Church during the past 2000 years.

Pope Benedict XVI writes in his Apostolic Letter announcing the Year: **“From Sacred Scripture to the Fathers of the Church, from theological masters to the saints across the centuries, the Catechism provides a permanent record of the many ways in which the Church has meditated on the faith and made progress in doctrine so as to offer certitude to believers in their lives of faith.”** *Porta Fidei 11*

He adds: **“In its very structure, the Catechism of the Catholic Church follows the development of the faith right up to the great themes of daily life. On page after page, we find that what is presented here is no theory, but an encounter with a Person who lives within the Church. The profession of faith is followed by an account of sacramental life, in which Christ is present, operative and continues to build his Church. Without the liturgy and the sacraments, the profession of faith would lack efficacy, because it would lack the grace which supports Christian witness. By the same criterion, the teaching of the Catechism on the moral life acquires its full meaning if placed in relationship with faith, liturgy and prayer.”** *Porta Fidei 11*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is offered as an indispensable tool to support growth in faith. Some parishes already have groups that meet at intervals to read and study this text. During the Year of Faith you may choose to start such a group and / or commit to reading a paragraph daily as a way of deepening your appreciation of the the Church's teaching.

“In order to arrive at a systematic knowledge of the content of the faith, all can find in the Catechism of the Catholic Church a precious and indispensable tool.”

PORTA FIDEI 11





Celebration of Catholic Education, St Mary's University College, Twickenham



A Papal Visit pilgrim, 2010

CONVERSION

Every baptised person is essential to the renewal of the Body of Christ. The generosity of our personal response to the invitation to turn away from sin and to seek to live in God's Light, not only has an impact on our lives, but also on the entire Church.

We read in the Pope's Letter announcing the Year of Faith that: **"...the Church ... clasping sinners to its bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal. The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God', announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor 11:26). But by the power of the risen Lord it is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, its sorrow and its difficulties."** *Porta Fidei 6*

During these months of grace we are invited to reflect seriously on our journey with God, to examine in what ways we are being invited to grow and change. The Christian calling is a life-long pilgrimage of faith. We can never say that we've arrived, but that we are constantly journeying in

search of God's Light. At every moment we are invited to convert, to follow the Lord's way, allowing ourselves to be shaped in and through His love.

The sacraments of the Church are a great assistance to us in this regard. The Eucharist is essential to the Christian Life. The Year of Faith is proposed as a **"...good opportunity to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, which is 'the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; ... and also the source from which all its power flows.'" *Porta Fidei 9***

You may also choose to receive more regularly the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Year. In this Sacrament we encounter the loving and merciful heart of God the Father. During Reconciliation we hand over to the Lord everything that burdens us and weighs us down. The Sacrament restores and heals us, giving us the strength to begin again.

Conversion is an ongoing process when we freely choose to respond to an encounter with God's love and mercy. The Year of Faith is an opportunity to embrace and respond to the call to conversion ever more generously.

"The Year of Faith... is a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord."

PORTA FIDEI 6





Caritas Social Action Network - Vision and Values day



CHARITY

One of the main ways that we witness to the authenticity of the Gospel message is through works of charity. We read in St James' letter: **“Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, ‘I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty’, without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead.”** James 2:14-17

Faith must be given expression through actions. We are called to put into practice the things that we profess, not least the greatest commandment (Mt 22: 36 - 40) which is to love God and our neighbour as ourselves.

In England and Wales the Catholic community witnesses to charity through a wide variety of activities. A large number are done on a personal and at a local level by individuals, families and parishes that have seen a need and felt inspired to reach out to people, especially the lonely,

marginalised and excluded. Many charitable works are also done by members of **Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN)**, amongst others. Pope Benedict reminds us that it is through the faces of those in need that **“the reflection of Christ’s own face is seen.”** *Porta Fidei 14*

During the Year of Faith the whole Church is invited to re-commit to love and service of others. It may be that you are already supporting local charitable projects. It might be that you’ve been thinking about joining a parish group committed to serving local people, but have just never got round to going along. There are also many ways to help those in need who live across the other side of the world in some of the poorest countries.

The Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis will be resourcing a week of service during the Year called **Little Way Week**, 6-12 October 2012 . This year the focus is particularly on schools, but any individual, family or parish can get involved. We can all do little things to make a loving difference to people’s lives.

ROADSHOW: *CSAN, with the dioceses, will be offering roadshows celebrating charitable works and exploring ideas for enriching our social engagement. The first of these will be in October 2012 in the Salford Diocese.*

“...there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.”
1 Cor 13:13





Passion of Jesus in Trafalgar Square, London



NEW EVANGELISATION

It is no coincidence that the Pope has organised a worldwide gathering of Bishops in Rome during the Year of Faith to discuss the theme: **‘The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith’**. The Holy Father has placed the call to mission at the heart of the celebrations. We read:

“Today as in the past, he [Jesus] sends us through the highways of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all the peoples of the earth (cf. Mt 28:19). Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation: in every age he convokes the Church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new. Today too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelisation in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith. In rediscovering his love day by day, the missionary commitment of believers attains force and vigour that can never fade away.”

Porta Fidei 7

One of the most effective ways of growing in faith is to joyfully share it! When

the Pope uses the word *‘new’* in the extract from the *Porta Fidei* here, he is not meaning that we need to learn and share a new Gospel message: The Gospel message of Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. What he is inviting every member of the Church to do is to seek new ways - means and methods - of sharing the eternal message of Jesus Christ. He is challenging each one of us to consider what new step we might take to respectfully make our faith visible and heard in our daily lives.

A small way you can do this is by carrying the **‘Faith Card’** that has been distributed across England and Wales. The Pope also highlights that Christians in the early centuries were required to learn the creed from memory. It provides a summary of the reason for Christian hope and during the ‘Year of Faith’ we are invited to learn and study the creed afresh.

Faith is not a private act. It is something that we profess as individuals and as a community, mindful that our witness could assist those who are not yet baptised and are sincerely searching for meaning and truth. There are a great many people searching in our countries and it is our duty to be credible witnesses to them.

“The Church on the day of Pentecost demonstrates with utter clarity this public dimension of believing and proclaiming one’s faith fearlessly to every person.”
PORTA FIDEI 10



AN INVITATION TO EVERYONE

Everyone is invited to celebrate the Year of Faith in some way at home, at school, in their parish, diocesan cathedral and elsewhere. Resources will be made available and initiatives offered in dioceses and also by the Bishops' Conference Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. On the final pages of this booklet you'll find an introductory snapshot of some of the things being offered.

'Year of Faith' Online

Information about events and initiatives being planned by dioceses across England and Wales will be published online. Throughout the 'Year of Faith' a growing number of links and material will be added to assist your planning and celebrations. www.yearoffaith.org.uk

Faith 'tweets' launch - sign up for Twitter and receive daily inspirational quotes throughout the Year of Faith: **@YoFtweets** Offered in partnership with Bible Society.

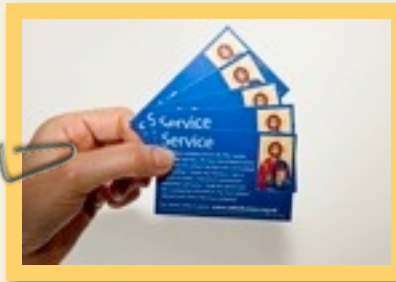
Podcasts - 'Art and Faith' series launch - downloadable reflections to encourage growth in faith knowledge and prayer. This series of podcasts will be offered by a variety of speakers exploring the connections between faith and art.

Year of Faith DVD

Catholic Evangelisation Services' (CaFE) has created a resource to support parishes to celebrate the Year. www.faithcafe.org

Faith Cards

One million of these have already been distributed in the Spring of 2012 in support of Home Mission. Some additional cards are available on request. You might choose to distribute them during the Year of Faith.



Home Mission Sunday, 16 September 2012

This is an annual day of prayer and celebration for the mission of the Church in England and Wales. There is a second collection to support the work done nationally by the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis and the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Desk. Free materials will be sent to your parish, and will be made available online, nearer the time. This Year's focus will be the 'Year of Faith'.

Diocesan Information

To find out what is happening locally, search your diocesan website for events and materials. Visit www.cbcew.org.uk and click on 'Dioceses'.

Pray

7 - 28 October 2012. Theme: 'The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith'. Please remember Bishop Kieran Conry (Arundel and Brighton) and Bishop Michael Campbell (Lancaster) in your prayers. They will be representing the Bishops of England and Wales at the Synod.

Read and Study

Ahead of the Synod an introductory text has been written called **lineamenta**. Every Catholic is invited to read and study it. The lineamenta text is available at: www.yearoffaith.org.uk Parish groups are encouraged to discuss its content in service of parish mission planning.

Throughout the Year there will be opportunities to support the celebrations - in your home, parish, school, cathedral and elsewhere. Below are some dates for your diary.

OCTOBER 2012 Year of Faith book

Publication for use in small faith sharing groups.

Newman Lecture

Encouraging dialogue between faith and culture.

Little Way Week (Schools) 6 - 12
October - seven days of prayer and service in the footsteps of St Thérèse of Lisieux.

DECEMBER

Bible Sunday, 9 December

Downloadable resources will be provided.

Come Home for Christmas

Seasonal outreach to non churchgoing Catholics.

JANUARY 2013

Ecumenism - encourage and support local ecumenical celebrations.

FEBRUARY / MARCH

Easter outreach posters in partnership with the Knights of St Columba.

Small faith sharing groups

Publication of a new resource for parishes.

APRIL

Rediscovering Scripture Conference, 24 - 26 April

MAY

Courtyard of the Gentiles
'Digital Evangelisation' event.

Pentecost Novena

Downloadable materials will be made available.

JUNE

Processions - we invite you to organise a Blessed Sacrament procession in your area.

JULY / AUGUST

Pilgrimages - during the Year the Pope is encouraging pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Rome and Marian Shrines. You are also encouraged to support parish and diocesan pilgrimages to local and national shrines, as well as celebrate the feast day of diocesan patrons.

World Youth Day 2013, 23-28 July, Brazil.

AUTUMN 2013

Home Mission Sunday

15 September 2013

Rosary project launch

Newman lecture

Local celebrations to end the Year.

FOR REFLECTION

"Only through believing, then, does faith grow and become stronger; there is no other possibility for possessing certitude with regard to one's life apart from self-abandonment, in a continuous crescendo, into the hands of a love that seems to grow constantly because it has its origin in God."

Porta Fidei 7

*Coordinated by the Home Mission Desk, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
Email: Mission.Volunteer@cbcew.org.uk*



World Youth Day Madrid, 2011

