

SOME DEFINITE PURPOSE



PAPAL VISIT LEGACY RESOURCES

When the Holy Father was recently asked about his visit to the UK he said that it gave him, 'fresh wind for his sails'; these words most likely apply to a large proportion of the Catholic Community in England and Wales as well. In whatever way you participated, whether by watching it on television or attending an event, we all witnessed and contributed to one of the most incredible home mission opportunities in British history. **But what next?**

Since the Pope's visit a great deal of reflection and prayer has gone into supporting the legacy, mindful that in his various speeches, homilies and addresses, the Holy Father very clearly presented to us all **'Some Definite Purpose'**, not just for 2011, but for many years ahead. His Holiness's words collectively spell out our task as home missionaries labouring in the footsteps of Blessed Newman, St Bede, St Augustine of Canterbury and others, and all those who have gone before us with the sign of faith:

'The Holy Father has given us new heart for our mission. In our Cathedral he spelt out that task. He said we are to be witnesses to the beauty of holiness, to the splendour of the truth and to the joy and freedom born of a living relationship with Christ.'
(Archbishop Vincent Nichols, Pastoral Letter, Diocese of Westminster, 24 September 2010)

Pope Benedict has presented to the Catholic Community and British Society as a whole 'Some Definite Purpose' which can be summarised under six headings or as, what might be called, 'Mission Priorities'.

Six Mission Priorities



- 1 To know our purpose
- 2 To grow in confidence
- 3 To witness to our faith
- 4 To serve others
- 5 To seek and engage in dialogue
- 6 To point to the transcendent

Under each heading you're invited to consider one way - small or large - you can contribute in the year ahead to the mission of the Church in England and Wales.

“““ *A sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path... Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Anyone who has ears should listen!*
Matthew 13: 3 - 9

To Know Our Purpose



To know our purpose



One of the key things that the Holy Father reminded us was to 'know our purpose'. Pope Benedict repeatedly spelt out the reason the Church exists and the vocation of the baptised which is to proclaim the Gospel. He said at Oscott

seminary on 19 September: 'In the course of my visit it has become clear to me how deep a thirst there is among the British people for the Good News of Jesus Christ. You have been chosen by God to offer them the living water of the Gospel... be sure to present in its fulness the life-giving message of the Gospel.' The laity has an essential part to play in mission which above all involves finding ways of communicating to others the reality of the unconditional love and mercy of God. One of the best ways to point others towards this reality is by responding to the universal call to holiness, remembering that Christian mission is lived and expressed in joy.

Blessed John Henry Newman wrote and meditated: 'God has created me to do Him some definite service, He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another, I have my mission... I am a link in a chain.' It is timely for us all to pray and reflect on what work we've been called to do, however small or great. Now is a good time to ask the Lord to speak to you heart-to-heart. It may mean that you receive an invitation from the Lord to serve in a new way, or it could be that you are inspired to continue the tasks you've already been entrusted. Whatever response you receive, know that your calling and work makes a unique contribution to the mission of the Church.

“““ *...it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelise, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole.*

Evangelii Nuntiandi 15

To Grow In Confidence



To grow in confidence



Repeatedly members of the Catholic Community share that they don't engage in faith conversations because they don't know what to say. There is an urgent need to address this. Knowledge gaps can be filled if we're prepared to give time to

fill them. Pope Benedict spoke about (particularly in the context of what we receive from the writings of Blessed John Henry Newman) the formation of a well-instructed laity. Quoting Newman he said at Cofton Park, Birmingham, on 19 September:

“” *God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.*

Saint Augustine of Hippo

“I want a laity, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, but men who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it” (*The Present Position of Catholics in England*, ix, 390).’

Every Catholic should make time for daily prayer and spiritual reading of some kind. This doesn't mean that we have to stock our shelves with weighty theology books. What the Holy Father specifically highlighted in this context was study of the Word of God, our Catholic history and of the Creed. He reminded us of the importance of prayer, reception of the Sacraments and the role of conscience. It is important to add to this list the benefits of making time to study the Pope's speeches, homilies and addresses. The accounts of the lives of the saints, in particular, also offer a treasure trove of inspiration and teaching.

To Witness To Our Faith



To witness to our faith



Confidence predisposes us to 'witness to our faith'. Pope Benedict came to the UK as a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He witnessed through his words, prayers and actions and invited the faithful to do the same. In particular he suggested

three ways of witnessing to the faith: through the use of visible signs (especially beauty), through the witness of how we live our lives and through the sharing of our own testimony and journey of faith. The Holy Father highlighted that witness springs from an experience of God's love and friendship.

Every one of us has a story to share of when we have experienced God's presence in our lives. It can be helpful to reflect and think about how we might share that experience with another person. It might have been or continues to be when we sit looking at the sea at sunset,

or it could be a feeling of peace on a Christmas morning? It will be different for each one of us and these experiences are given not just for ourselves but are to be shared. As Archbishop Nichols wrote recently, it is important that when we do share with another person we follow the Pope's example:

“““ *In speaking of our faith he was always so gentle and courteous, so sensitive to the achievements and anxieties of his listeners, so clear and reasoned in presenting difficult points, so humble and open-hearted. We must strive for these same qualities when speaking about our faith, in witnessing to its truth.*

(Pastoral Letter, Diocese of Westminster, 24 September 2010)

To Serve Others



To serve others



One of the most moving moments of Pope Benedict's visit was when he visited St Peter's Residence (the home for the elderly) in London, which is run by the Little Sisters of the Poor. In doing this the Holy Father communicated through his

actions the centrality of loving service in Christian life. Scripture teaches us that without service and love of the poor, Christians are but clashing symbols, their words are empty. Catholic Social Teaching and our practical response to it are central to the mission of the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict repeatedly emphasised solidarity with and service of the poor, that the Church exists to serve.

Life is busy and if you've a family, a mortgage and a job, it can be very hard to find time for anything or anyone else. The Gospel invites and the Holy Spirit motivates us to be attentive to those in most need. The Holy Father spoke about this clearly and similar sentiments were shared by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, at the departure airport: The Pope's message '...is a challenge to us all to follow our conscience to ask not what are my entitlements, but what are my responsibilities? To ask not what we can do for ourselves, but what we can do for others?... For many, faith is a spur to action. It shapes their beliefs and behaviour; and it gives them a sense of purpose... Crucially, it is their faith that inspires them to help others.' (19 September 2010). So it must be in our lives. It is important to reflect for a moment on our practical response to these words.

“” *You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength... You must love your neighbour as yourself.*

Mark 12: 30 - 31

To Seek And Engage In Dialogue



To seek and engage in dialogue



During his Visit to the United Kingdom, the Holy Father sought dialogue with politicians, civic leaders, leaders and members of other Christian traditions, other religions and also non-believers. In this way, he reminded us that this is

our shared task as a Catholic Community. Central to this dialogue is the language of reason which his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, reflected on in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason). Pope Benedict once again made clear that the Christian faith makes reasonable sense.

Catholic Mission in 2011 and the years that follow will be furthered by each of us being better equipped to enter into conversation with people about questions of life and faith. The Pope's words in this regard can be summarised as follows: our dialogue should appeal to faith and reason; we are called to contribute to faith conversation and debate especially with members of other religions and those of no religious faith.

Britain is enriched by being a country that welcomes people from other cultures. In many of our cities and towns there are large Italian, Polish, Indian, Bangladeshi, West Indian and Ukrainian communities, amongst many others. There is also a diversity of places of worship which makes for a rich religious heritage. Deep and lasting friendships have been fostered between religious and community leaders. It is essential that the Catholic Community across the UK engages in dialogue with all people. The Holy Father said, 'The dialogue of life involves simply living alongside one another and learning from one another in such a way as to grow in mutual knowledge and respect.' (Address at the interreligious meeting, 17 September 2010)

How might you respond to these words?

To Point To The Transcendent



To point to the transcendent



'Heart speaks unto heart' was the theme of the visit of the Holy Father. To many, in the first instance, these words communicate that it is possible to experience an intimate spiritual encounter with God which can not be expressed in

words. Repeatedly the Holy Father referred to and participated in events that pointed and witnessed to transcendent realities. Eucharistic adoration in particular featured prominently in this regard. He invited us all to explore ways of bearing witness to the transcendent; to focus on the Eucharist (Sacraments) and respond to the universal call to holiness.

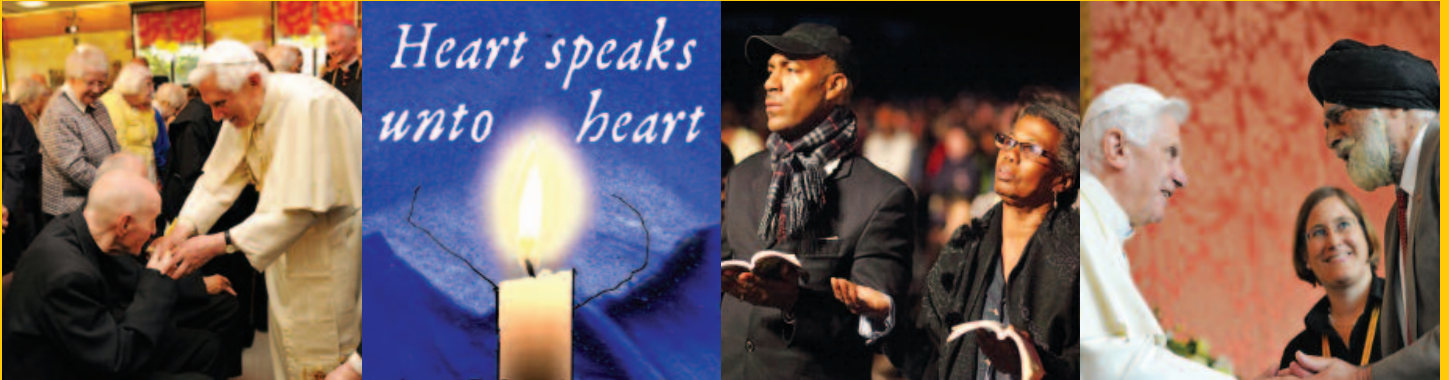
How can we witness to the transcendent in our lives? The answer to that is found in the life and writings of Blessed Newman:

'By letting the light of faith shine in our hearts, and by abiding in that light through our daily union with the Lord in prayer and participation in the life-giving sacraments of the Church, we ourselves become light to those around us; we exercise our "prophetic office"; often, without even knowing it, we draw people one step closer to the Lord and his truth. Without the life of prayer, without the interior transformation which takes place through the grace of the sacraments, we cannot, in Newman's words, "radiate Christ"; we become just another "clashing cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1).'

(Pope Benedict XVI, Reflection at Hyde Park, 18 September 2010)

“” *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.*

LEGACY TIMETABLE 2011



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January - December 2011

Where next? The Holy Father's 2010 UK visit was grace-filled and leaves us a legacy which has 'Some Definite Purpose'. What will be the practical and long-lasting fruits in your community and family? With fresh wind in all our sails, how can we continue to signpost people to the Light of Jesus? For resources and more information please see below and www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/legacy

Legacy Timetable 2011

During the next twelve months a number of resources will be made available to support Catholic parishes and individuals to contribute to the Papal Visit legacy.

January Distribution: To every parish in England and Wales of the 'Some Definite Purpose' resource. Pick up your copy and share it with a friend.

February Growing in Confidence: A text will be made available to read out at Masses on 20 February to precede the Feast of the Chair of St Peter, Apostle

Journey of Faith: Collation of statistics from the Rite of Election (RCIA) and a selection of faith stories. Please send (having sought the necessary permissions) faith testimonies from your parish or deanery RCIA group to the Home Mission Desk for possible publication.

March Outreach: A day conference focusing on outreach to non churchgoing Catholics is happening on 26 March, with representatives attending from dioceses across England and Wales.

All the materials will be published online to support and benefit parishes and deaneries.

April Faith Nation: Launch of a new online video resource to promote the sharing of faith.

May Called and Sent: A format for an annual Parish Mission Commissioning will be published online to be used ideally on Pentecost Sunday which falls on 12 June.

June Adoremus te Domine: Deaneries are invited to have Blessed Sacrament processions as close as possible to the solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (26 June). Resources will be provided online including a holy hour.

July and August Pilgrim People: Individuals and parishes are invited to visit one of the Marian Shrines in the UK to pray for the intentions of Pope Benedict XVI and for Home Mission. They are also invited to support their diocesan pilgrimage which may happen another time in the year.

September Home Mission Sunday, 18 September: This is an annual day of

prayer for the work of evangelisation in England and Wales. Parishes will be invited to celebrate the first anniversary of the Papal Visit to the UK.

October Little Way Week, 1 - 7: Seven days of service in the footsteps of St Thérèse of Lisieux

Inaugural Newman Lecture and materials for parish study groups (date to be confirmed)

November A Year With The Holy Father: Publication of materials to help parishioners revisit and study his words.

December Come Home For Christmas: An initiative to invite non churchgoing Catholics to reconnect with their local Catholic community. Resources will be provided online.

Monthly Resources Available: Home Mission E-Briefing and the Papal Visit Legacy Resources Sheet. If you'd like to receive one or both of these please contact the Home Mission Desk: tel. 020 7901 4818; email: mission.volunteer@cbcew.org.uk