

North East prayers for peace and unity



People gathered at the vigil in Sunderland to pray for peace. Photograph: David Allan.

THE biggest turnout to date of Christian and Muslim women and children attended the Pray for Peace meeting in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

More than 70 joined in service at Our Lady's ruined chapel in Jesmond Dene on May 20.

Comments from those who attended included: "I brought my daughter just to show her how people can bond" and "It's wonderful – the fact we have all gathered together for prayer."

At the end of May, prayer vigils were held across the region as people united to speak out against the terrorist atrocity in Manchester and pay tribute to those who had lost their lives.

On May 29, a Requiem Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, was held for the victims of the Manchester Arena attack, with prayer vigils across Northumberland, Tyneside, Darlington, Hartlepool and Durham.

In Sunderland, Zaf Iqbal from the Sunderland Inter Faith Forum, organised a vigil in Keel Square, and was joined by locals and church and city leaders including Father Marc Lyden-Smith, Rev Chris Howson from Sunderland Minster, Iman Fahim Tahir and councillor Lynda Scanlan, who

by Veronica Whitty

all spoke out against acts of terrorism and needless violence.

Photographs of the victims were held up and their names were read out as people lit candles and laid flowers and a solo violinist performed a moving musical tribute.

Attending the unity prayer event in Jesmond on May 20, Yasman Qureshi, from Heaton, said: "The occasion was very well organised and a lot more people turned out this year than the last two which I attended."

"The purpose of this gathering is great and has always been close to my heart. "Creating an understanding between Islam and Christianity is so much required at this time."

"We know for a fact that the two religions are like brother and sister as they believe in one God and the same God at the end of the day."

"I enjoyed the last prayer sung by all – make me an instrument of peace. It carried the message of both parties beautifully. The sharing of candles is an attractive way of highlighting it too."

During refreshments afterwards, Christine Wickens and Mary McLoughlin explained the Rosary, and

Hengameh Ashraf Emani explained the equivalent in Islam: the Tasbeeh.

Hengameh has been helping with this event from the start. She is doing a PhD on British Muslim women at Northumbria University.

She and Hazel Jones-Lee, who has also taken part from the beginning, exchanged candles during the event to begin the sharing of the sign of peace among those gathered.

The Rev Catherine Lack from St Thomas, Haymarket said: "I am really pleased to have attended this event."

"I work with Muslims and Christians in my work at Newcastle University and in the centre of the city at St Thomas."

"The two policewomen at the event were really impressed. It was an excellent event, and shows how things can happen really creatively, with a little bit of planning and a lot of prayer."

Sister Agnes from Stanbrook Abbey, now at Wass, Yorkshire – who is doing a PhD on Christian-Muslim relations – joined the event. She visited a mosque at Whitley Bay and met the Imam.

A collection from the day will be sent to Mary's Meals.



Hengameh Ashraf Emani and Hazel Jones-Lee exchange candles as a sign of peace and unity at the end of the service in Jesmond. Photograph: Greta Gill.

A DAY OF REPARATION AND CONSECRATION at Our Lady of Mount Grace Osmotherley Saturday 15th July 2017

NOTE: Pilgrims should assemble at 11.30am in St Peter's Anglican church, Osmotherley Village followed by a silent walk to the Shrine. To finish at 6pm approximately.

Led by Fr. James Benfield

For further details, please contact: Mrs Marie Bedingfield 01642-530739

The 45th Annual Blessed John Ingram Walk **It's on Sunday 23 July 2017**

LED BY Fr. Shaun O'Neill

Meeting at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Newgate Street, Newcastle upon Tyne 2.30pm for 2.45pm start

Then to St Edmund's Chapel, High St. Gateshead for an Ecumenical Service followed by refreshments (non-walkers please meet at St Edmund's at 3.30pm)

Organised by the St Vincent de Paul Society with the help of clergy and parishioners of St Andrew's and St Edmund's

Apostleship of the Sea
Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

ANNUAL DAY OF PRAYER & PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY ISLAND OF LINDISFARNE

to be led by the Rt Rev Paul Mason
AoS Bishop Promoter, England & Wales
Saturday 17th June 2017

A peaceful day of prayer and reflection with the opportunity to pray for seafarers and to meet AoS Port Chaplains, Ship Visitors, Parish Contacts and other volunteers and supporters.

Highlights include:

- Celtic Prayer on the beach 12.30 noon
- Mass at the Church of St Mary the Virgin 3pm
- Safe Crossing Time 11:15 to 19:40

Apostleship of the Sea is an agency of the Catholic Church working to support seafarers visiting our ports each year.

For further information please contact Regional Port Chaplains Paul Atkinson on 07906 212 426 or Peter Barrigan on 07713 924 504

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