



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013

THE WEAVINGS

Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Department for Spirituality

February 2013

A Universal Call to Holiness (1)

In Chapter Five of *Lumen Gentium* (the Vatican II document on the Church that we looked at a couple of months ago), the Council declared that “all the faithful of Christ of whatever their rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity”. There is a universal call to holiness.

Lent is a good time to refocus our energies on that aspiration and in the Gospel for Ash Wednesday, Jesus offers us three ways in which we can work on our own call to holiness: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Perhaps one thing to make clear about the holiness we are called to is what it is not! It is not a call to become “holy Joes” or “holy Josephines”. If you have met truly holy people, one of the things you probably noticed is an inner joy and serenity and, often, a twinkle in the eye. Yes, you know they pray—and do without—and give of their time, money and energy to others but they do not carry their holiness heavily... it is something that gives them life.

So, let us think about how **prayer** might feature in our Lent this year. Many of us will make an effort to go to devotions such as the Stations of the Cross which is a beautiful way of reflecting on that last fateful journey of Jesus to Calvary and death. Another thing you might like to try is to take one station a day and pray with it... think about who is involved and what they might have been thinking and feeling as things unfolded—and what you hope you might have said or done for Jesus at each stage. Allow each station to speak deeply to your heart.

Another good practice to get into is the **Examen**. Many of us remember the nightly Examination of Conscience which is helpful but often miss out an important part—giving thanks to God for the many blessings that have come our way each day. In the Lent resources, there is a design for a small card to pop in a purse or wallet or on the bedside table which guides you through the Examen. These, and a leaflet giving more guidance are on the diocesan website.

And **fasting**... Would you say that people outside the Church know that Christians fast just as Muslims do in Ramadan? The fast is not the same (we eat and drink during daylight hours) but Lent fasting is more than giving up sweets! Fasting is a practice that is found in virtually all the major religions—it demands a certain amount of self-discipline which is part of maturing in faith. Think about how you might build it into your Lent – but also be creative. Do you have a bad habit that needs to be addressed? How might you “fast” from that? And, perhaps, you have a tendency

not to eat as well as you should... might *your* fast be to be conscious of the gift of food and to give thanks for it?

Finally, **alms-giving**—giving to others who are in need. Part of this money might come from savings brought about by fasting (please don't just store up goodies to



scoff on Easter Sunday—that is not quite the point of the exercise!) but Lent can offer you a deeper challenge than that. Some religious communities do a kind of stock-check of what they have and gather together the things that are surplus to their needs to be given to the poor. Is this something you might do—rigorously? Or, perhaps, think of a sum that you will notice giving—not just a bit of change you have left over but something that

will feel like a sacrifice. Last year, the Government matched funds raised by CAFOD pound for pound—hopefully the same will happen this year so a good incentive to be generous in your own turn!

Spiritual Legacy of Vatican II series continues after Easter

Lent 2013!

Resources for Lent on CD have been sent out to deaneries and other groups. They can also be ordered from Diane Murray at spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk or by telephoning the office below. Most of the resources will also be available on the diocesan website.

Diocesan Festival 2013

Plans are underway for a Diocesan Festival for the Year of Faith—hoping that the rain holds off this time! Dates: 29-30 June 2013. Venue: Youth Village. More details soon—but please put the date in your diary.

Saturday 9 March Study Day looking at Catholic perspectives on death and dying. 9.15am-5.15pm at St Cuthbert's Catholic Chaplaincy, Durham. Cost £50 but some help with the cost can be offered through the Lay Training Fund—forms available from the Education Department office.

Contact Details

To sign up for **Weavings** or the daily e-mail, contact Kathryn Turner, Head of the Department for Spirituality via the Department for Education
St Vincent's Offices, St Cuthbert's House, West Road,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne. NE15 7PY
0191 243 3313
or
0191 534 4212
E-mail: spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk

At Retreat Centres...

Our local Retreat Centres offer many opportunities to deepen our prayer lives. Here is just a small selection – contact them direct for more information.

Minsteracres

Saturday 16 February, 10am - 4pm

Walking retreat, Minsteracres team

Wednesday 27 February, 10am - 4pm

Quiet day, Rosarie Spence RSM

Thursday 28 – Sunday 31 March

Holy Week retreat Minsteracres team

info@minsteracres.org

01434 673 248

Centre for Prayer & Mission, Seaham

Tuesday evenings—from 15 January

Fr Robert Barron's series, *Catholicism*

Friday 1 March, 7-9pm and

Saturday 2 March 9.30 – 4pm

Enneagram 2 with David Mahon

marymichael.lee7@googlemail.com

0191 581 3249

St Antony's Priory, Durham

Tuesday 5 February, 2.15 pm and five following Tuesdays

Come to the Well and Drink

Exploring prayer and spirituality in groups

(Note: this course can also be run in parishes/ deaneries/ Churches Together groups) Please contact St Antony's.

bookings@stantonypriory.co.uk/

0191 384 3747

Morpeth Mini-Pilgrimage Blessed by Sunshine!



Photograph: Jerry Laidler

Despite last minute fears that the event would have to be cancelled due to snow, the day of the Mini-Pilgrimage to Morpeth and Newminster dawned bright and clear. Around 150 pilgrims, including people from St Robert's, Fenham and students from St Robert's of Newminster, Washington—and as far afield as Edinburgh—braved the weather and came to enjoy the day. Many people made the walk—with

others following the pilgrim route “virtually” in the church. Everyone was made wonderfully welcome on their return with home-made soup made by St Robert of Newminster parishioners and many stayed for a choice of workshops before a final prayer around the newly-blessed icons of St Robert. The next date is **23 March**, at **Waterhouses and Durham** in honour of **St John Boste**.

Rehallowing the Land...

Praying with the Northern Saints

Despite the cold and snow, dozens of people turned out for the January deanery evenings looking at the legacy of our Northern Saints and at ways of praying with icons. Sadly, the session planned for St Mary's, Whickham did

succumb to the weather but will be rescheduled.

The next three evenings are:

27 February—Bishop Auckland

6 March—St Joseph's Gateshead

13 March—St Joseph's, Ushaw Moor

Prayer Station of the Month

During Lent, you might like to encourage people to wear a simple purple ribbon to mark the Season.

This Prayer Station is based on one used last year when many parishes took up the idea. Put the prayer station somewhere easy for people to see with ready-cut strips of narrow purple ribbon and a few small safety pins.

Many people are wearing the lapel crosses which were given out as part of our marking of the Year of Faith. This is an idea that has since spread throughout the country!

Sr Michael from the Evangelisation Team offers the suggestion of combining your cross with a purple ribbon. 'Take a small length of purple ribbon and make an inverted V and

Wear a purple ribbon



Loop a short piece of ribbon and fasten with a pin.

Wear it during Lent.

Think about how you will answer people who ask what it means.

put the point of your cross through it and attach to your lapel. Or make a loop and attach to your cross.

If people ask, remind them that a cross is a universal Christian symbol—a statement that says “I am a Christian, a follower of Christ”. The purple shows that we are in Lent—which is a time for special prayer and fasting as well as increasing our giving to those in need.

Even if you do not say anything, wearing your cross and ribbon is a way to bear witness to our faith in a secular culture and to evangelise without using words.

And at Easter, think about having a Prayer Station with white or gold ribbon as we witness our joy in the Resurrection and our faith in the Risen Lord. 