

VATICAN II

and DEI VERBUM



Charles Whitehead, former ICCRS President and English NSC Life Member, unpacks the relationship between Scripture, Tradition and the Teaching Magisterium of the Church as expounded in key Vatican II document "Dei Verbum".

Verbum".

One of the most important and interesting documents to emerge from the Second Vatican Council is *Dei Verbum, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*. Important - because a correct understanding of Divine Revelation is essential if we are to grow in our faith; interesting - because it addresses the often misunderstood relationship between Scripture, Tradition and the teaching authority exercised by the Church. The importance the Council attached to *Dei Verbum* is evidenced by the fact that it is one of only two **Dogmatic Constitutions** of Vatican II, the other being the great document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. In this article I hope to open up the exciting truths of sections 7 to 10 in chapter two of *Dei Verbum*, which explain this relationship between Scripture, Tradition and the teaching office of the Church, the Magisterium. This will help us better appreciate the importance of a Catholic understanding of **Divine Revelation** and the ways in which it is safeguarded, penetrated and handed on by the Church from one generation to the next.

Although I have attempted to simplify and shorten the teaching, I am aware that it still does not make easy reading – we are dealing with complex truths. Some of what I have written is taken directly from *Dei Verbum*, and some is my own attempt to explain things in an easier way, so there is inevitably some repetition. As some Catholics seem not to understand the relationship between the twin pillars of Scripture and Tradition, I think it's worth taking the time and trouble to improve our personal appreciation of the truths laid out in this remarkable document. It will also be of enormous help to us when our brothers and sisters in Christ from other fellowships and expressions of church (for whom the fullness of Divine Revelation is held to be solely and exclusively in the Scriptures - the '*sola Scriptura*' view) challenge us, out of a genuine interest, to explain our Catholic position. On such a fundamental issue of disagreement we need to know why the Church takes the position she does, so let's unpack the key teaching of *Dei Verbum* chapter two, sections 7 to 10.

DIVINE REVELATION - It is God's will that everything he has revealed for the salvation of us all will be communicated to us. This revelation involves the unique self-disclosure God chooses to make in Christ, through which we are invited into relationship with him and to a personal commitment to him. But this communication, which we know as **Divine Revelation**, begins long before the coming of Christ. "*The invisible God, out of the abundance of his love, addresses people as friends and converses with them to invite them to communion with him*" (*Dei Verbum* 2). Then "*In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son*" (*Heb.1:2*). Jesus, the full revelation of God (*2 Cor. 1:20; 4:6*) went on to commission Apostles to preach the Gospel to everyone and to make disciples of all nations (*Matt.28:19-20*). Put in another way, the Gospel had been promised through the prophets (*Hebrews 1:1*) and was preached, demonstrated and fulfilled by Christ himself. What we know as the **Great Commission** was then given by Jesus to his Apostles, who in turn faithfully fulfilled their mandate - by their preaching and example they handed on what they had heard Christ say, seen him do, and had learned through the presence and prompting of the Holy Spirit, poured into them in all his fullness on the Day of Pentecost: "*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*" (*Acts 2:4*). Inspired by the Spirit, they and their successors preached the Gospel, worked miracles, shared their lives, built up the community of the Church, took care of the poor, committed the message of salvation to writing in the New Testament Scriptures, and passed on their experience. All this experience, called Tradition, has been continually developed through 2000 years by the many Fathers and Doctors of the Church, by Saints, Popes, theologians and scholars, who have all prayerfully pondered and reflected upon everything God has revealed, and because the Apostles also committed the message of salvation to writing, again under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they also had the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament to guide them. As Vatican II reminded us, Scripture and Tradition together constitute the supreme rule of faith (*Dei Verbum* 21). This is what we mean when we speak about Tradition and Scripture working together and merging into a unity of **Divine Revelation**.

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION - The Apostolic Succession is something we may know about, but we may not realise how

**“Renew your wonders in the Church today
as by a New Pentecost”
(Pope John XXIII)**

vital it is to our understanding of **Divine Revelation**. Jesus called together a particular group of twelve men and appointed Simon Peter to be their leader. They were to make disciples and to teach and to govern the new Christian community – the Church. Now in order to ensure that the Gospel was not diminished but remained alive in its fullness within the Church, the Apostles in turn appointed bishops to succeed them in a formal structured hierarchy and handed on to them the same authority to teach and preach the Gospel in their own locations, which we today know as dioceses. It is through the Apostles and their successors, the bishops, that the Apostolic Tradition is seen and preserved. So the Apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books of the New Testament, was thus to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time. What was handed on by the Apostles included everything they had learned – whether by word of mouth, by letter, or through experience – which contributed to the holiness and faith of God’s people. So the Church, through this on-going process, continues to hand on and perpetuate in her teaching, life and worship, everything that she herself is and believes.

SCRIPTURE - Scripture is the Word of God, written down by the Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, given once for all, unchangeable and occupying a unique place in the Church. The role of the Church is to preserve, reflect upon, explain, and make more widely known all that is contained in the Scriptures. **“To understand the Scriptures better we must then acknowledge that they are the word of God in human language. God is their author and the sacred writers are also true authors. Both dimensions must be honoured”** (The Gift of Scripture, section 23). As Blessed John Paul II reminded us, Catholic exegesis does not focus only on the human aspects of biblical revelation, nor only on the divine aspects; as they are united, it strives to highlight both of them.

We are particularly called to take the Scriptures seriously by a diligent, regular reading of them (**2 Tim. 3:16**). This is in addition to listening to and reflecting on the 3 or 4 Scripture texts presented to us by the Church at our Eucharistic celebrations (**1 Tim. 4:13**). Personal reading of the Scriptures is important because as members of the living community of faith in today’s increasingly

secular world, we need the constant spiritual feeding we find in God’s Word. When I came to a new, living faith in 1976 and was filled with the Holy Spirit, my knowledge of the Scriptures was very poor and I knew that the Lord was asking me to address this weakness. So for two years nearly all my free time was spent reading the Bible – I read it from cover to cover several times, followed different themes, studied the prophecies of the Old Testament, absorbed the teaching of Paul, highlighted lots of passages, underlined verses, and wrote notes everywhere. I still have the falling-to-pieces copy of the Jerusalem Bible I used then, and even though I no longer use that particular copy, every time I see it I feel encouraged to keep up the habit of daily Scripture reading I formed at that time. Wherever I may be, I always have a Bible with me. So I still read Scripture every day, coming prayerfully into the presence of Christ and walking with him. As St. Jerome reminds us: **“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”**.

A LIVING TRADITION - Tradition, as we have already seen, comes to us from the Apostles and develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. So as time passes, through study and reflection there is a growing understanding of the realities and the words of God’s truth which have been passed down. Tradition is not something stagnant, but alive and growing: **“There is a continuous learning and receiving of new insights through attentiveness to the Scriptures and to the Tradition of the Church”** (The Gift of Scripture section 11). The riches of this living Tradition are poured into the life, prayer, faith and practice of the Church, and in the same way the Scriptures themselves are more deeply understood and applied in the life of the Church. So God is in an on-going conversation with the bride of his Son, and the Holy Spirit who is the living voice of the Gospel in the Church and in the world, leads and guides into the truth everyone who believes.

TRADITION, SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH’S TEACHING AUTHORITY - There is always a close connection between Tradition and Scripture, as they both flow from the same divine source and work in unity towards the same end. Together they

form one deposit of the Word of God given to the Church, and accepted with loyalty and reverence. The task of authentically interpreting this one deposit of the Word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living, teaching office of the Church, known as the **Magisterium**. This teaching office, held collectively by the bishops in union with the Pope, is exercised in the name of Christ by teaching only what has been handed on to it. It is not above the word of God but serves it by listening to it, guarding it and explaining it faithfully with the help of the Holy Spirit as a divine commission. This teaching authority, the **Magisterium**, seeks to ensure that all new insights are faithful to the Word of God. Everything the Church teaches and presents for belief as divinely revealed is drawn from this one deposit of faith. Tradition, Scripture and the teaching office of the Church are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others. Together, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they individually and collectively guide us and contribute to our spiritual growth and well-being.

SUMMARY - The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, bring us the story of God's relationship with his creation, culminating in the coming of Jesus his Son, the Word made flesh. Taken together with Tradition, the lived experience of the Apostles and their successors which brings us the benefits of 2000 years of the life and experience of the Christian community passed on from generation to generation, we have available to us the fullness of **Divine Revelation**. As part of this community, which includes those who have gone before us and those who are alive today, we all share together the responsibility for handing on God's revelation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, guided by our bishops and protected by the Magisterium of the Church. This is why it's so important for us all to keep abreast of the on-going teaching of the Church by reading the old and new documents and Papal encyclicals which deal with her life and mission in the story of salvation. I hope my reflections on just a part of **Dei Verbum** may be helpful in this process, and may challenge us to grow in our understanding of the richness and wonder of **Divine Revelation**.

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References:

- Dei Verbum
- Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, 1965
The Gift of Scripture
- Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England/Wales & Scotland, 2005

The Other Half



Sue Whitehead

I've just celebrated my birthday (70 years!) with a fantastic Sunday family lunch. It was wonderful to be together – 46 of my nearest and dearest – with time and space to chat and refresh relationships. Our four children worked hard with us on Saturday preparing the room with balloons and one banner, "Love One Another," from CELEBRATE. The hall looked great and everything exceeded my expectations.

Our youngest son, Tom, had volunteered to do the speech and did very well. He had re-read *The Other Half* as research and had enjoyed reliving various memories. He even read a little to tell other people how much I'd written about the family – and warned them that I was still writing so to be careful what they said to me!

Charles regaled everyone with how we met – at a fancy dress party dressed as "A gambler" and "I Want to be Evil" (that was a current pop song I hasten to add!). Not a combination which reflects our present life style! As my cousin said – "Bet there was much rejoicing in Heaven when you two were born again"! It is so good at certain moments of our lives to take stock and review where we've been. To refresh the memories of what we have lived through and how we have changed. It's often easier to recognise the fruit of God's plans in retrospect. Sometimes, it is only in looking back that we can see how He has brought people together; changed circumstances and opened doors. Not always seen nor appreciated while happening – but the threads of our lives are woven by God into a final picture which makes sense if we give Him the freedom to use every part.

My Dad was with us – 93 years old and still loving me totally! He has taught us so much about God's Love and I am grateful that we are still able to spend time together. My sister, two cousins and their families, Charles's family and my dearest friends – every one has contributed to my history and therefore also to my future.

I realise how much we have changed – our priorities, desires and lifestyle. God has been amazing. Even through the bad times (and there have been a few) His hand has held on to us and helped us keep to His plan. As I said at the party about Charles - It's been a privilege to be married to him – and I'm eternally grateful to God that we found His plan for us – and it was to be together.

And many of you reading this have also been part of my journey. Thank you for being there.

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The Broken Vessel who poured out blessings to others

Kristina Cooper remembers Peter Viner (1952-2012)

Madonna House, the community founded by Catherine Docherty in Canada, produces a monthly publication called Restoration. One of the things I love most about it are the appreciations of the members of the community who have died. I don't know any of these people and most of them have lived a very hidden life, doing simple things – cooking, farming, administration, serving the poor. Yet I find it incredibly moving and encouraging to read about their love of God and fidelity to him despite their brokenness and failings, written by the friends who love them. It tends to be only people who have a high profile, who have tributes written about them but it is good to hear about these hidden saints too, which is why I felt this month I would like to write a little about Peter Viner, a friend of mine who was part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal family and who died just before Christmas, after a year of battling with liver cancer.

Although I knew Peter for over twenty five years, I realized at the packed funeral Mass that there was so much I didn't know about him because he was such a private almost hidden person, content to be in the background and to serve. He was one of the original members of Myles Dempsey's Prince of Peace Community in Greenwich and in fact was the site manager for the first New Dawn conference in 1987. He found his true vocation at New Dawn, however, helping out in the children's ministry, which he did for the next 25 years. He loved this because he was a bit of child himself, with the same spontaneity and sense of fun. And it would be probably through his service at New Dawn that people in the CCR might have come across him - a tanned lean figure, with his knitted hat pedalling around the site on his rickety bicycle on some errand, or pushing his friend Richard, who had "Locked in Syndrome", in his wheelchair. What most people didn't realize was that at nights after serving all day Peter would sleep in the marquee to guard the sound equipment. The more the sacrifice the more he loved it!

It also no doubt put him back in touch with his younger days when for almost a decade, after dropping out of his expensive Catholic public school, he had wandered the globe. He had lived in a squat in the East End of London, a houseboat in Holland and travelled all through the Americas from Chile to Ohio and later through Iran and Afghanistan on the hippie trail to India. Here he ended up spending three years helping in the L'Arche Community and with Mother Teresa in a leprosy clinic, before returning half starved to his parents beautiful home, Star House, in 1978. Such was his culture shock on coming home, however, that he refused to live inside and instead slept in the open air summer house in the garden, which he fixed up with planks and glass to keep the wind out.

His father, who was a member of Lloyds, had hoped Peter would go into the city or at least have a proper career. But Peter never did. He drifted from one low paid job to another. He ran errands, stacked supermarket shelves, did agency work. It was only in the last decade of his life that he got a stable job working for the "The Little Way Association", a low tech, small Catholic charity, which supports priests and projects in the 3rd world. He loved this and reading all the letters from those struggling in the missions. After some years living in the Prince of Peace Community in Greenwich, he eventually ended up living in an attic in the presbytery of St Mary Magdalene's in South West London, where he was to remain for the next 20 years, helping out in the parish in small ways. Fr Martin Edwards, the current parish priest, who inherited Peter and had known him for 17 years, was struck by his spirit of prayer and service and said simply at the funeral, "He was the best man I knew."

Somewhere on his youthful travels Peter had found God, and although his wanderlust never left him, his refound Catholic faith gave him a new stability and focus and enabled the wounds of his earlier life to be turned into blessings. He became an enthusiastic member of Myles Dempsey's prayer group in New Eltham. Having spent so much of his life on the margins, he had amazing compassion for others who were rejected and lived on the fringes. Without the responsibilities of marriage and family, although paradoxically he longed for these, he was also free to serve and go where the Spirit blew. His family and close friends would complain that they never knew where he was and there was a certain sense of mystery about how he spent his time because he never talked about his "good deeds". At the funeral some of these were revealed in the stories of those present – the people in prison he visited, the sick and housebound he supported, the lonely that he took an interest in. A parishioner from Ghana, whom I met in the hospice where Peter was dying, told me, "He was the most humble man I have met and the first white man who treated me as though I was somebody." And Peter with his public school education and upbringing had the most wonderful manners and almost Don Quixote gallantry which he would lavish on all he come across regardless of their age or station in life.

"Don't idealise him," said one of his best friends, who kept vigil at his bedside for days as he was dying. "He could be a difficult man too." And I am sure he was for those who were very close to him. But for me he was also a saint. Not because he was perfect but because he was someone who gave God everything that he had. And God used him in his brokenness to be a channel of blessing for others.

Magnificat



Alastair Emblem, a worship leader at St Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Farnham, Surrey, reflects on Mary's Magnificat and how guidance for a good charismatic prayer meeting can be seen in it

I was preparing material for a prayer meeting just after the feast of the Assumption, when the Gospel was the famous account of Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth, including the Magnificat. I remembered someone saying many years ago that this passage gives an account of what was arguably the first charismatic prayer meeting, and it occurred to me that this Scripture has many valuable guidelines for anyone leading or participating in a prayer meeting.

I am not claiming that any of the following thoughts are particularly original, they have been gathered from many places and brought together in what I hope will be a helpful 'lectio divina' format, to enable individuals and prayer groups to meditate on the passage in sections, and draw inspiration from the word of God. Incidentally, I was reminded recently that Mary's prayer contains at least 17 references to Old Testament passages, so she must have been very familiar with the Scriptures – an example to us all! The Scripture passage in bold italics below is Luke 1: 39-55 (New International Version).

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. - Even though Mary had plenty of her own concerns, she was willing to go to her cousin, in response to the angel Gabriel's surprising news about Elizabeth's pregnancy. Attending a prayer meeting is never just

for our own benefit: it is an opportunity to share the good news of God with others. Mary “got ready... and greeted”. Meetings will always be more fruitful if we have prepared by praying in our own time, meditating on the Bible regularly (as Mary must have done). Greeting and welcoming other attendees, making them feel comfortable, will also bear fruit.

When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

We need to be prepared to listen to each other at a prayer meeting – God speaks to us through other people’s witness and experience, as well as through Scripture. At every prayer meeting (indeed, whenever we pray) we should Invite the Holy Spirit to fill us. We can never have too much Holy Spirit – we are leaky vessels, and need constant topping up.

In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!” - Loud praise does not come naturally to many people, yet it is very effective in raising the spiritual temperature of a prayer meeting if we can give ourselves permission to “break the sound barrier”. Prayers of blessing are particularly effective – blessing God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and proclaiming God’s blessing on all present.

But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? - As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. - Just as Elizabeth expressed her wonder, awe and thankfulness of God’s amazing grace, we too can give praise and thanks to God for all His blessings. We may feel moved to express our heartfelt joy physically – raising our hands, clapping, perhaps even leaping like the unborn John the Baptist!

Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished! - Like Mary, if we put our faith and trust in God’s promises, we too will be blessed.

And Mary said: “My soul glorifies (magnifies) the Lord - The rest of this passage is a wonderful hymn of praise which can be imitated, adapted, and expanded - with singing if at all possible. Praising God from the very depth of our being, as Mary did, is an essential aspect of any time of prayer. Magnifying God means giving glory to God’s greatness, recognising that He must grow in importance in our lives. “Mary is like a magnifying glass that intensifies our love of her Son.” (Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.)

And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, - We worship God on the basis of the things that are true about Him. We rejoice as individuals in the truth that Jesus has saved each of us personally, by his death on the Cross, and has enabled us to share in his resurrected life, by baptising us with his Spirit.

For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed. - Like Mary, we should cultivate humility. We are entirely dependent upon God for our very existence. “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matt 23:12). We honour Mary and the very special role she played in enabling God’s word to become flesh. Although she is especially

blessed, we are all blessed and beloved sons and daughters of our loving Father, through our unity with Jesus, and are all called to holiness through him.

For the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. - We recognise our dependence on God and His holiness, which is the source of our holiness. We praise the powerful name of Jesus, Son of God and Saviour.

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. - We can confidently pray for God’s mercy and forgiveness on past and future generations; pray for our departed relatives and those yet to be born.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; - We can acknowledge God’s power; thank Him for past help; and pray with expectant faith for His will to be done.

He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. - We can pray to be delivered from our human tendency to proud thoughts. Pray that those who are self-sufficient will seek God’s help.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. - We can acknowledge God’s sovereignty and lordship in our own lives, and pray for those in authority. Pray for justice for the oppressed and ask God to use us to work for justice in the world.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. - Give thanks for God’s provision. Stay hungry for God’s graces. Pray for guidance as to how we can help the needy.

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers. - Praise God for sending Jesus the Messiah, the fulfilment of His promise to his people that through them would come the Saviour of the world. Pray for the conversion of the world.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
I humble myself today and acknowledge
You as the Mighty one, the Holy One,
the Lord of all creation and history;
yet You are also Merciful and Forgiving
to those who come to You in repentance and faith
and in need of help.

Following the example of the Blessed Mary,
I cry out from my heart that You are my Saviour:
fill my spirit with joy
so that I may praise you for ever.



Christ has died Christ has risen

“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: 5

Have you ever wondered why our Churches are fuller on Good Friday than they are on Easter Saturday night? Is it because we are more comfortable with death than resurrection? After all death is part of our experience and we can handle it for better or for worse? Is it because we don't know what to do with resurrection and what it means? Is it because we are not aware of the wholeness of the mystery? I don't know the answer but it is true that Good Friday holds more attraction than Easter Saturday and Maundy Thursday. I think part of the problem lies in our understanding of what we celebrate. Most of us celebrate a 2000 year old story and don't make the connections with our own story. Most of us have heard the truth that Jesus died for us and so we gather to remember that death; but the resurrection and the last supper? We've not realized that when we celebrate the triduum we enter into a ritual celebration of the Paschal mystery that is part of who we are.

Sr Helen Prejean, whose life has been captured in the film *Dead Man Walking* (the story of her encounter with a prisoner on Death Row), has had a profound effect on me and I remember leaving a conference at which she was speaking and praying 'Lord make it as real in me as it is in her'. Surely this designated Year of Faith is an opportunity to discover what is at the very core of our Christian tradition; the reality of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ for us here and now and to let it be real. We are caught up in something that is eternal. The Christ we have been given is far more than we can ever imagine. How do we live with the paradox of death and resurrection? I guess all we can do is ponder the mystery and let it bear fruit within us. In the very stuff of our lives, in the very creation that we live in and for all time, Christ is dying and rising present in all things good or bad now and forever.

Surely in this Year of Faith we are being invited to open our eyes and see? The events of the week that we call holy culminate in the Easter Triduum. I always find myself terribly moved on the evening of Holy Thursday when we wash the feet of brothers and sisters just as Jesus did, a symbolic reminder that when Jesus took bread and wine and shared it, it was an invitation to do what he did and learn how to serve. Whenever we share our lives with one another we celebrate Holy Thursday. Every loving action is a

reminder to the world of the Christ who gave his life for the sake of the world. I remember once being at a conference and seeing a woman looking after a child who had severe learning and physical difficulties. The woman spent every moment making sure that the child was experiencing life in as full a way as she could without any thought of herself. On Good Friday we remember the death of Jesus. It's a powerful reminder that every death we have to experience, and there are lots of deaths in our lives, is a Good Friday experience. Are we prepared to die to our own desires, wants and selfishness for the sake of another? I often think of Jane who inherited a huge amount of money who wrestled with herself and had to die to her own desires before being able to give the money away to build a hospice in Africa. Then we watch and wait for the light to come, a clear call to trust and believe in the presence of God defeating even the darkness of death. Where have we glimpsed new life? What have been the moments when we have experienced peace, love and hope? Every resurrection within us and amongst us is a sharing in the victory of the risen Christ. I have just spoken to a woman who is facing a huge trauma in her life. Her whole world has been turned upside down but somehow she knows that from the ashes of her life something new will come and so she waits in joyful hope

After that we spend the next fifty days reminding ourselves that 'we are an Easter people and alleluia is our song'. Easter goes on and on and the Church wants us to recognize that truth. So what is the challenge? I think it lies in questions like: Do we recognize the paschal mystery in our own lives? Are our lives filled with hope and the joy of Easter? Would others know through our lives that we are an Easter people? Don't let Holy Week pass you by. Gather and celebrate, yes the story of Jesus' death and resurrection but also your own story too and then live it out for the world to see and in this Year of Faith make it real. Let others know that Christ has died and Christ is risen.



Fr. Chris Thomas heads up the Irenaeus Project. He is a member of the Emmaus Family of Prayer.

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WHERE THE HELL IS GOD?



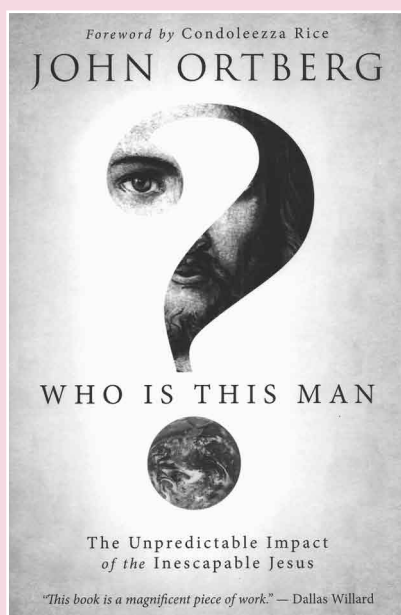
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EnCourage: a call to be holy and chaste for those of same-sex attractions

Looking at the Western Church of the 21st Century, you would think it was preoccupied with the topic of same-sex relationships. Maybe you wouldn't be far wrong. Never before has the need been so great for the people of God to provide spiritual and truly fraternal support for persons who experience differing degrees of same-sex attraction or gender uncertainty. The Church needs to be the place where truth can be looked in the eye without fear and without a person being pigeon-holed or stereotyped because of what they might, or indeed might not, feel. It is for this reason that the Church, out of great love and wisdom, rejects contemporary labels such as 'homosexual', 'gay' and 'queer' while taking very seriously someone's sexual attractions.

Over thirty years ago, Cardinal Cooke of New York saw the need to provide a setting where Catholics, their families and friends, plus any interested others, could gather in confidence and safely address questions around human sexuality in a setting of prayer and celebration of the Sacraments while remaining wholly rooted in mainstream Church. And so Courage was born, a spiritual and fraternal support group of Catholic lay men and women who aspire to live chaste lives in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Courage, presently known as EnCourage in Britain, but soon to change its name to Courage in union with the international Catholic apostolate, has been in operation for over 20 years across the country. What does EnCourage offer? We meet in the evening at least twice a month as a group in the centre of London and sometimes have a midweek celebration of the Mass. More groups are being set up across the country as priests request help to deal with the growing pastoral issues they are being presented with. With more parents of same-sex attracted children wanting support we have begun a support system to help them to be in touch with one another. We are beginning a women's group, a group for married men and another for young adults. We have regular retreat days and social events and welcome others on board who do not experience same-sex attraction or gender uncertainty but who share our vision, values and goals. We also help the clergy to understand more deeply the labyrinth that same-

sex attraction and gender uncertainty can be.

Above all, we keep returning to the truth that living chaste lives in accordance with the Catholic Church's teaching truly does bring about a deep joy and peace to the soul, whatever one's sexual attractions. We aspire to serve as good examples to others, being mindful of and witnessing to the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but also necessary as Christians. There is a strong sense of genuine companionship and healthy intimacy among those who attend with our gatherings made up of people of every age and from every continent of the world, as well as others from different denominations and occasionally different faiths. We also enjoy strong relationships with other Courage chapters across the world.

Whatever same-sex attraction or gender uncertainty a person may experience, whether outright or only even very slightly, EnCourage seeks to provide a safe pastoral place where each story is listened to, heard and understood. We place no expectations upon a person but merely hold each individual in a place of prayer and genuine support wherever they are at on their journey. In his recent visit to the London group, Archbishop Vincent Nichols praised those present for their commitment and said that "many will be encouraged by the example that the group will give."

Above all we are about deeply respecting and honouring one another. We don't demand or expect change, yet this often takes place as a gradual unseen process and looks different for every individual once a significant spiritual walk with Christ begins to take root. Some people attend EnCourage from a place of never having practiced sexually. Others have practiced for years but sense there genuinely has to be more to life. Some attend while still in short-term or even long-term partnerships desiring a safe place to assess where they are at and to ask some deeper questions. And yet the call remains the same: to be holy and chaste before God, however often, much or little we may fall into sinful patterns of behaviour.

**If you want to know more about EnCourage and its goals, visit www.couragerc.net/
E: encouragelondon@yahoo.co.uk or M: 077 9921 6623**

**DO YOU HAVE ANY NEWS TO SHARE?
LET US KNOW.**

**Write to: Goodnews (CCR Centre)
St. Mary's, 264 Fulham Road
London SW10 9EL**

CCR Centre



Tim Stevens, the Development Manager, brings us up to date with news of the CCR Centre in London

We are so blessed by the Servite Order at St Mary's Priory. The facilities at the Renewal Centre in the basement crypt of Our Lady of Dolours, Fulham Road are coming together with gas central heating fired up this week. The main office is a wonderful hub location, not only for the GoodNews magazine but also to greet visitors.

Our first international visitor to the centre was Felix Ali Chendra, a leader from the CCR in Indonesia, whose visit coincided with the Goodnews Editorial meeting on 4th January. The CCR in Indonesia blossomed in the 1980s and 1990s and came to fruition in 2008 when Indonesia hosted the first ICCRS Asia conference. There are many young people particularly students involved in the CCR in Indonesia. Christians do endure some persecution because of their faith but Felix said that this just made them stronger and more united.

Our first locally based official visitors to office were Sonia Tissera and Eric Jeevaraj from the Risen Lord Community, which was founded by Lalith Pereira from Sri Lanka, and is one of the growing charismatic communities in the London area, who came for a meeting with Michelle Moran on 6th February 2013.

We have been gifted two computers, one a desktop is already in use updating the GoodNews directory of contacts. The second, a laptop will enable us to play CaFE DVD series while long-distance visitors will be able to email friends and family. ***If you wish to help equip the Renewal Centre or make a donation please email tim@faithcafe.org***

HOT NEWS

The formal Opening Mass (celebrated by Archbishop Emeritus Kevin McDonald) for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Centre is:

Monday, 4th March - 6.30pm -

at Our Lady of Dolours Church,
264 Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL.

All our supporters are invited to join us, with drinks and nibbles to follow.

If you intend to come, please let us know.

Email: ccruk@onetel.com - Call 0207 3525298

Gabriele, the GoodNews Support Manager and Renewal Centre Co-ordinator, has been off for Food Safety training so that we can serve up some simple fare to lunchtime visitors.

We have an intercession team with growing representation from London-based prayer groups. Early sessions suggest the Renewal Centre will be a melting pot for different groups and spiritualities to come together; clearly these are exciting times. Plus we have a sense that this would become a place of powerful prayer, walk-in clinic where people will be spiritually nurtured with the love, peace, hope and joy of Christ.

Please hold us in your prayers as we find ways to serve friends within the Renewal across the UK. We seek to be open fully after the Opening Mass, but would still ask visitors to ring the office in advance in case the Renewal Centre has been booked for an event.

Thanks also to Mary Callan, for donating a painting, and to Ruth F. for donating £ 300.



F Mary Callan, from York, donated a painting



The Meeting Room



Cross of the Renewal items sold at the Centre

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

MBE AWARDED TO MIRIAM MASON-SESAY



Miriam Mason-Sesay, whose testimony we wrote in Goodnews a decade ago, has had her work for education in Sierra Leone recognized with a MBE in the New Year's Honours list this year. Miriam grew up in a charismatic renewal family (Martin and Vanessa Mason who live in Northamptonshire are her

parents). She has always been very committed to her Christian faith and spent several years living in a covenant community in the United States.. Afterwards she taught French at St Emund's Ware, then became Head of Languages at the Salesian Boys College in Battersea but her heart was always in Africa. Her brother Swithun and fellow student (now Dr) James Boardman had spent time in Sierra Leone in 1994. When they got home they had set up a small charity with the help of family and friends to help support some of the local community they had met there who were very poor and couldn't afford an education.

Miriam always had a great spirit of adventure and felt called to go and set up a school in the name of the charity to help the poorest children, who had had no education for years because of the horrific civil war that had torn the country apart. The first school was in a small house, where Miriam lived in one room and taught under a tree and on the verandah. But 12 1/2 years later the charity, now called **EducAid**, is responsible for funding

and running one primary and four secondary schools in Sierra Leone, plus a primary and a secondary Teachers' Centre under Miriam's energetic direction. Under her inspirational leadership and in collaboration with a highly committed EducAid trained local staff, the EducAid schools, achieve the best exam results in the country year after year. The pupils continue to be those who would otherwise not get an education, some of whom have been former child soldiers.

EducAid not only helps fund the schools, but also takes care of the pupils' other needs too and some of them live permanently in EducAid facilities. This costs on average £180 per child a year. A few of the brightest pupils not only have finished school but have gone on to higher education, funded by individual sponsors. There are now six youngsters on international scholarships studying engineering, medicine and ICT in China, Russia and Venezuela. As well as supervising the schools Miriam also has to do a lot of fund raising to keep the schools going and comes regularly to the UK. These days her work is supported by not just family and friends but Catholic schools she goes regularly to visit and some parishes who have become regular supporters of the work.

Ten years ago she married Alhassan Sesay, a Sierra Leone national, who shared her vision and was a great support to her. They have one son, Kofi (now aged 8). Tragically her husband died four years ago. Others might have wanted to come home in such circumstances but Miriam has chosen to remain in her adopted country to serve its people and help raise educational standards. She sees her task to inculcate in the next generation the vision that one person can make a difference in the life of a nation... and she certainly has. **For further information about her work and for those who would like to give their financial support see www.educaid.org.uk**

Welsh News

ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL PREPARING FOR MISSION AND EVANGELISATION

- A former Baptist church, opposite St David's cathedral, has been purchased by the archdiocese of Cardiff to serve as a hall for St David's cathedral parish and to be a mission and evangelization centre for the diocese. The Cornerstone, as it has been renamed, has been undergoing renovation to make it fit for purpose. The hall will be the venue for the next meeting of Isles (8th-10th March 2013), which brings together representatives of the NSCs of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to meet together and discuss the way forward for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. As part of this weekend the leaders will pray for Wales, and for those involved in the CCR or are involved in ministry or evangelization. (see events under Wales for more information).

In addition to this Archbishop George Stack is inviting all in the archdiocese of Cardiff who have an interest in "making disciples"

to gather at the Cornerstone on Friday 8th March 2013 to discuss the projects currently being carried out and explore ways of working together for Evangelisation and Mission. **Anyone interested in this should contact Fr Gareth Leyshon on 02920 778631 or E: leyshon.gareth@rcadc.org**

CELEBRATE WALES - The second Celebrate Wales weekend will be taking place 4th-5th May and take place at Corpus Christi High School, Lisvane, Cardiff. Among the speakers will be David Matthews, Sue Whitehead and Pippa Baker. The theme of the weekend is "For such a time as this" (Esther 4.14). **For more information see www.celebrateconference.org/weekends/wales.**



NEW WELSH NSC WEB SITE - The Welsh NSC website www.ccrw.org.uk has been going through a facelift and is currently being developed to provide Wales with the news and information it needs in order to help promote events and activities around Wales.

NEAL LOZANO AND THE UNBOUND MINISTRY COMES TO IRELAND



Neal Lozano and Joe O'Callaghan

The Irish School of Evangelisation is hosting a weekend, this Spring, led by Neal Lozano (the author of the best selling book "Unbound") in Dublin 20th-2nd

April. Neal, who

is the founder of the Heart of the Father Ministry (www.heartofthefather.com/), has been working in the inner healing and deliverance ministry for over 30 years and has extensive experience in this area and travels the world with his wife Janet, training and equipping people in this ministry. As well as "Unbound", he has also written the book "Resisting the Devil: a Catholic Perspective on Deliverance" in which he shows how evil spirits can keep people bound in sin patterns and how deliverance links in with the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The deliverance ministry has always been a controversial one with people either dismissing it entirely and refusing to believe that evil spirits exist at all, or else going overboard the other way and becoming obsessed with the idea of demons everywhere. Thus solid balanced teaching in this area and training people to minister in this essential ministry is very much needed. This is particularly the case nowadays as many in our contemporary society fall away from God and Christian practice, leaving them more vulnerable to the work of evil spirits particularly in the area of obsessions and addictions. Lozano's "Unbound" model of deliverance prayer is simple yet effective, pastorally sound and fully integrated into the sacramental life in the Church.

Joe O'Callaghan, the co-founder of the Irish School of Evangelisation, with his wife, had read Neal's book "Unbound" some years ago and was very impressed by its theological and pastoral content. This led to him going to an "Unbound" conference in Philadelphia. He comments, "I was thrilled with it and I asked Neal if he would come to Ireland if we hosted a weekend for him, as I feel this ministry

is desperately needed here in Ireland." Lozano agreed and thus this first visit to Dublin has been arranged. As part of the preparations for Neal's visit, Joe has been showing the DVDs of the Unbound teaching to various groups in Ireland on a monthly basis for the past year. He says the reception from the groups have been "extraordinarily positive" and there was a very good response to Neal's low key approach to the subject. Joe comments, "There is no screaming and no confrontation with evil spirits in his ministry. His emphasis is not on the demonic but the power of the Lord and it is about praying for deliverance from what is preventing people from flourishing and setting people free."



Matt Lozano, Neal's son came in February for a pre-conference session at the Avila Prayer Centre in Dublin to train people to help with the prayer ministry at the April conference. Joe comments, "This ministry is really essential because we have so many

people who are bound and who are suffering depression or lack of hope in their lives and this ministry really helps them in this." The basis of the Unbound ministry are Repentance and Faith, the Power of Forgiveness, Renunciation, Authority and the Father's Blessing. Joe believes that people being prayed with for the baptism in the Holy Spirit are often not receiving the full release of the Holy and the charisms in their lives because of past hurts, blocks caused by unforgiveness and bondage caused by evil spirits. He comments, "I believe that this ministry will help release the gifts of the Holy Spirit in people's lives and bring new motivation to serve Jesus Christ in his Church." **Those who would like to attend the conference can contact Joe O'Callaghan on 00 353 1282 7658 or E: isoe@esatclear.ie. (see back page for venue)**

PARISH MISSIONS, RETREAT DAYS AND CaFÉ EVENINGS for the YEAR OF FAITH?

The team that have produced the wonderful CaFÉ resources also go out on the road. Drawing on their extensive experience these events are tailored to meet the needs of the parishes concerned and are a mix of fun, inspiration and teaching to help equip 21st century Catholics for today's world. They are very good as an impetus to run Life in the Spirit seminars which are a useful follow up. **Those interested call 0845 050 9428 or email info@faithcafe.org**

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PARISH EVANGELISING CELLS?

Fr Victor Vella, from Holy Innocents' parish in Orpington, is organizing a trip to St Eustorgio's in Milan for the international workshop on the parish cell system. (Translation into all main languages including English available) This will be from 19th -24th May 2013. This is a perfect opportunity for priests and lay people involved in formation and evangelization in their parishes to come and experience first hand this model of parish life and see if this model could be a useful way forward in their own situation. If you hurry a few places still left.

**Contact Fr Victor Vella, Holy Innocents', Strickland Way, Orpington, Kent, BR6 9UE
tel 01689 817537 Email victorvella@hotmail.com
Web: www.holyinnocents.org.uk**



We are a community of priests, religious, and lay people working together to preach parish, school, and youth missions throughout Ireland. We also teach and give practical training on all aspects of evangelisation. If you are 18 or older and are interested in serving God through this very fulfilling and exciting ministry, please contact us to find out more and to explore the possibilities for you. Jesus says, "Come and you will see." (Jn 1:39). **Céilí Catholic Community for the New Evangelisation, Horseleap, Moate, Co Westmeath, Ireland. T: +353 (0)579 335 922 - Web: www.ceilicommunity.net**

LONDON DAY OF RENEWAL MOVING

The London Day of Renewal which has met at the Friends Meeting House opposite Euston Station for over 30 years is having to change venue due to a major refurbishment of the Friends Meeting House, which will take an estimated two years to complete. **The new venue is also close to Euston station and is St Aloysius Church, 20 Phoenix Road, Euston, London NW1 1TA.** The last meeting at the Friends Meeting House will be on 18th May, the day before Pentecost, and the first meeting at the new location will be Saturday, 15th June 2013. A map and the new details will be given out at future days of Renewal.

BREAKING NEWS



As we went to press with Goodnews on 11th February we heard that Benedict XVI had

just announced his resignation and was stepping down as pope. As pontiff he had always been a great supporter of the ecclesial movements and communities, which were very dear to his heart and had made an invitation to them to come and celebrate Pentecost with him in St Peter's in May this year. When we know more about what will happen now we will let you know. In the next Goodnews there will be a special tribute to him for all he has done to promote the culture of Pentecost in the Church.

MEN'S WORK DAYS AT HOUSE OF THE OPEN DOOR?

The House of the Open Door community, in the Cotswolds, are looking for men who might like to come for a weekend (11th-15th March 2013) to help them with various practical jobs round the community premises. Good meals, fresh air, fellowship and prayer... and a beer in the evenings promised. **For further details contact Maria or Tom maria@houseoftheopendoor.org 01386 852084**

RIP



FR DENIS HERLIHY (1934-2012), the inspirational parish priest from St John the Baptism parish in Timperley, in the Shrewsbury diocese, who was born in Cork, Ireland, died just before Christmas on 20th December 2012. He had retired in 2008 but had left a huge mark in the area through his work in the CCR. He was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1976, an event that changed his life and he pioneered Life in the Spirit seminars and Masses for healing in his then parish in Birkenhead. He continued with these in Timperley, which he moved to in 1981. Under his direction this became almost a charismatic parish, with multiple prayer groups. He faithfully attended the annual priests' Easter retreat and was passionate about bringing Jesus to all, especially the poor and marginalized, as he always had a great commitment to social justice too.

JOHN GOLDEN, another great servant of the CCR, died in January in Bridgewater, where he had retired. As part of the leadership team of a prayer group in St Albans, he is best known for his wise mentoring and support of the famous Upper Room prayer group for young people which flourished in the 1980s and 90s.



ANNIE COLBERT, one of the motivating leaders of the CCR in the North West, who worked very closely with Fr Peter Dolan, at Holy Family parish in Ingol, Preston, died on 26th January 2013 at the age of 67. Under Fr Peter's inspiration and with Annie's enthusiasm and hard work, the Holy Family parish among other ministries, hosted a wonderful bookshop called Covenant Books. This began in a broom cupboard, but grew to be a resource for the whole North West and helped disseminate literature and knowledge about the CCR to the wider Church for 30 years.

KITTY DEVINE, a well known figure in the CCR in the Southampton area, and a parishioner of St Peter's, Winchester, died of a heart attack while on a visit to her home in Ireland on January 2013. Born in Clonmel, she became involved in CCR in the 1970s and was a regular at the Celebrate conference and the Alton Day of Renewal. She did a lot to serve the Lord both as a health visitor in her working life, and after her retirement, to all those in need, as well as being a much loved part of the CCR family.

ADVERTISING RATES

If you are interested in placing an advert on the Goodnews Magazine please email us with your request at ccruk@onetel.com or give us a call on 0207 352 5298

- FULL OUTSIDE BACK PAGE (FULL COLOUR).....£580 plus VAT
- HALF OUTSIDE BACK PAGE (FULL COLOUR).....£300 plus VAT
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- HALF INSIDE BACK PAGE (FULL COLOUR).....£300 plus VAT
- HALF INSIDE BACK PAGE (SINGLE COLOUR).....£220 plus VAT
- BOXES ON THE NOTICE BOARD OR INSIDE BACK PAGE (92mm x64mm).....£ 100
- HALF PAGES (SINGLE COLOUR IN MAGAZINE, when available)..... £200 plus VAT

Please ring our office for a quote if you want to have an INSERTS

BOOK NOW!

'Take and eat'
(Rev 10:9)

**CATHOLIC
PROPHECY
CONFERENCE**

Buckfast Abbey, Devon

Fri 24–Sun 26 May 2013

With Andy Stayne & the New Life Prayer Community

For a booking form email sheonacornes@hotmail.co.uk
Or see www.newlifecatholiccommunity.com or call 07866098847

Go and Speak...
(Ezekiel 3:1)

PARTICIPANT'S TESTIMONY

"As soon as I walked into the first evening meeting at the conference, the Holy Spirit's presence was really tangible. I really felt that everyone's heart and focus was to worship God no matter what happened, and as a result God was free to do whatever He wanted. Without exaggeration, the conference was life changing for me and I actually felt that the work that God did in me was something so deep it was like what Jesus had experienced during the Transfiguration!!! Only a work God can do! In addition, since the conference, the ways in which I hear God have become clarified and more intense. I loved it. Oh, and I also really appreciated the strong scriptural focus, knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. It definitely inspired me to get back into the Word in a deeper way. (Laura)"

CONFERENCE COST: £125

(inc. accommodation, meals & conference fee)

TO BOOK, please email: sheonacornes@hotmail.co.uk

See website: www.newlifecatholiccommunity.com

Call 07866098847

“Freedom In Christ”

with NEAL LOZANO “UNBOUND” MINISTRY

20-21 April 2013 [9am-6pm]

Clarion Hotel, Liffey Valley, Dublin – [Exit 7 off M 50]

Cost: €30 [Conference Fee - No Daily Rate]

“If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” Jn 8:36

Holy Mass will be celebrated both days - Music Ministry: Robbie Hurley

Contacts: Joseph O’Callaghan 087 - 237 7577/ Fr Joe McDonald PP 086 - 360 2680

Lyla Shakespeare 087 - 650 9465/ Fr Gerry Campbell PP 087 - 648 3919



At the Service of the New Evangelisation

“Pray, that the Lord’s message may spread quickly” 2 Thess. 3:1

PENTECOST VIGIL

*“Faith comes from what is preached,
what is preached comes from the Word of God”*

Rom 10:17

Saturday 18 May, 2013

9 p.m. - 1.00 a.m. Holy Mass at 12 midnight Celebrant: Fr Columba Jordan CFR - Derry



KNOCK



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YOUTH 2000

**‘NEW LIFE’ - BLESSED SACRAMENT CHAPEL, DUBLIN 1
IRISH SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION**

WE ARE ‘GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM...’

2 Thess 2:1

**[Organised by the ‘Irish School of Evangelisation’ - ISOE -
Tel: 01 282 76 58 ; email: isoe@esatclear.ie]**

