



Vicariate of Evangelisation & Catechesis Incorporating Marriage, Family Life & Youth

Making Disciples—Speaking The Truth In Love

AS OUR NEW year is well under way, I hope you enjoy this edition of ***Evangelium***, produced by our Vicariate for Evangelisation and Catechesis, incorporating Marriage, Family Life and Youth. We exist to help you become more missionary and grounded in your faith by providing you with opportunities for formation in both word and deed in your life as disciples.

In the opening pages you will see the members of the vicariate, followed by examples and descriptions of some of the specialised work they do in the diocese. Each in their own way, working at our common goal of, “making disciples” (evangelisation) and, “speaking the truth in love” (catechesis).

A major part of our, “making disciples” has been through the launch of our, ***“Mission Made Possible”*** online course. This seven week programme in evangelisation helps people to grow in discipleship, forming a proactive attitude for evangelising, along with the vital, “how to” go about it, in an appropriate and discerning manner. Hundreds of people, both home and abroad, have graduated from this course and have seamlessly integrated living their lives as missionary disciples. You can read about some of the fruits of this in the, “encounters” that are described.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to know his saving truth and live by it. It is so important to, “speak the truth in love” to our families and youth, that they may be formed and established in faith. With this in mind, you will read with interest the initiatives to nurture and catechise our youth and families and provide reliable and in depth formation for adults.

If you have any comments or reflections on what you read, you may send them to me: Fr. Jon Bielawski:

jonathan.bielawski@prcdtr.org.uk



Fr Jon Bielawski



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Meet the team.....	2/3/4
A window encounter.....	5
Youth ministry.....	6/7
Spirit led encounter.....	8
Marriage & family life.....	9
Evangelising through a lens.....	10
Franciscan at home.....	11
Listening chairs.....	12/13
Fr Robbie Low—Mama Mia.....	14
Contact us.....	14



Meet the team...

Hi I have been working as part of the Vicariate since 2015 when Bishop Mark gave the directive that each parish in our diocese should have an Evangelisation team. That task has expanded tremendously since then, as we are now focused on helping parishioners become missionary disciples throughout the diocese and beyond.

One of my favorite pieces of scripture is Ezekiel 37: the Valley of Dry Bones. It has provoked my imagination and kept me fascinated for many years. However, I really did not understand the significance of it until I began working in my current role. Now when I see what a life-giving and transformative effect, the Good News has on people, I truly understand what God was saying to the Prophet. "Prophecy, prophecy to these bones and they shall live" As I accompany Pilgrims through our formation "*Mission Made Possible*" I see "a great army rising up" to go forth as Agents of Life and Change with each ordinary day as their mission field. Before working for the diocese, I was employed as a Youth Worker and University Chaplain by my parish. A qualified Counsellor, I also worked at St Michael's Catholic Secondary School in Camborne, Cornwall, until it closed. I am also a University Chaplain in Plymouth and assistant catechist preparing parents to catechize their children for First Holy Communion as well as working directly with young people to prepare them for Confirmation.

Michele Thompson

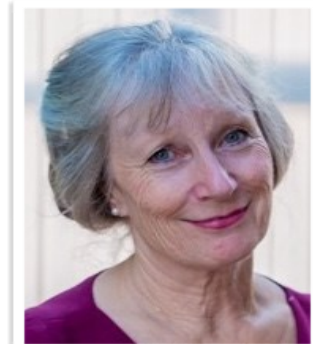


I feel incredibly blessed to be serving God in these ways and my love for Jesus and humanity keep me going. In my spare time I like to run and yes....to evangelise!

michele.thompson@predtr.org.uk

- * I work for the Vicariate: Marriage and Family Life and Catechesis,
- * I became a Catholic in my early twenties
- * I am a Secular Carmelite, married to Tim, mother to eight children and grandmother to eight (to date)!
- * We have my parents, both in their 90s, living with us.
- * Worked in the NHS as a midwife and health visitor, and as specialist HV with CAMHS.
- * Studied Pastoral Theology at Maryvale Institute, and I am an Associate Lecturer there on Early Modern Spirituality and the Psychology of Marriage & Family.
- * Help my husband who is a Deacon, in our parish.

Deborah van Kroonenburg



deborah.vanKroonenburg@predtr.org.uk

I joined the Vicariate for Catechesis and Evangelisation in November 2020 and facilitate the '*Mission Made Possible*' course – a preparatory course in intentional discipleship and evangelisation, for small groups.

Mission Made Possible has helped deepen and give a new dimension to my work as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist and also for my pastoral visiting.

I live in Torquay with my husband. My four grown-up children and my granddaughter live fairly close by.

I am also the author of two books – one in the Christian spirituality genre and the other children's fiction.

Julia Beacroft



julia.beacroft@prcdtr.org.uk

Hello! My name is Pippa Worth and I belong to St Catherine's parish in Wimborne, Dorset and have done for twenty years. I joined the diocesan evangelisation team in 2017 for eighteen months and then again as a casual worker at the beginning of 2020, just before the first lockdown, to work with parishes in East Dorset. The pandemic, however, had other ideas! Now that there are no borders, and I am involved with 'Mission Made Possible' (MMP) which is online, I am meeting people from different areas (including Wales) via Zoom! I have enjoyed getting better acquainted with technology but miss seeing all the teams I used to visit. MMP, though, is the perfect vehicle for stoking a desire for mission online.

My favourite verse from Scripture is '...nothing is impossible with God.' Luke 1:37. Although a cradle Catholic, my conversion took place at Medjugorje for which I am enormously grateful

Pippa Worth



pippa.worth@prcdtr.org.uk

Born into a Catholic family and Educated in North Yorkshire, prior to spending 25 years running agricultural businesses at a range of locations.

Following a serious stroke, I reset my lifestyle and focussed on assisting marginalised people through both working in the Probation Service and in the Voluntary Sector within prisons.

Now in retirement I am involved both in my own parish in Axminster and the Diocesan Evangelisation Team helping others encounter the joy of developing a closer relationship with Christ.

Joe Harrison



joe.harrison@predtr.org.uk

Hello, I am Saskia Hogbin! I am Youth Ministry and Events worker for the diocese. In normal times I would be offering events and activities at deanery and diocesan level, along with organising retreats and pilgrimages locally, nationally and internationally. Currently I have been running events online including a drama course, dance course, Advent and Lent reflections and a couple of online services. Some of these can be found on our YouTube page: Diocese of Plymouth Youth.

As a family we regularly attend Mass at St Mary and St George in Totnes, although we frequently attend mass at Our Lady of Lourdes and St Petroc in Ashburton as it is closer to home. Our two older children enjoy serving on the altar at Totnes.

Saskia Hogbin



saskia.hogbin@predtr.org.uk



“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 may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.”



The diocesan initiative to help parishes become more missionary.

You will:

- Learn to collaborate with the Holy Spirit.
- Progress in your spiritual life

- Form a Missionary Attitude
- Learn how to evangelise, sensitively and appropriately.
- Learn to listen.
- ‘*Learn the art of living*’ Cardinal Ratzinger
- And so much more

Contact the team for more details

A Window Encounter!

AS WE LEARN to evangelise we become more aware of the Holy Spirit to give us opportunities and when the glass panel in my front door was damaged recently, I realised that this was an answer to my daily prayer “Lord bring me someone who I may share you with today’.

When the double-glazing fitter arrived to measure up and was standing in the hall, he commented on how gruesome the large crucifix hanging on the wall appeared. I was quick to counter that although it did look horrific it actually illustrated Christ’s deep love for us all and how he gave his life for us in order to save us all from death. I stressed how he loved us all despite our failings and wanted us to be with him forever in the future.

‘He gave his life for us in order to save us all from death’

John was quite taken by this concept of God’s love and chatted about how it would impact on him personally as a non-believer.

In these barren times for ‘Encounters’, I thanked the Holy Spirit for answering my prayer and included John, but really considered it was a little more than seed just sown generally. However, a few days later John returned to fit the window. I was a little apprehensive about revisiting the deep spiritual conversation we had previously had, but to my astonishment he said ‘Does this God really love everybody?’ (pointing to the crucifix).

Once again I emphasised Christ’s universal love and how we could improve our understanding by talking to Christ through prayer. After a long conversation he indicated to me that he wanted to learn more and supplied me with his personal contact details for use after lockdown.

This was a wonderful experience. I had actively sought an encounter, yet *without* my direct intervention, the presence of the crucifix in the hall had prompted the conversation.



Reflection:

- Probably in the past I would not have responded so openly to his first remarks and ended up discussing sport or Covid restrictions.
- I failed to embrace the opportunity for praying together but I am left with an open invitation to follow up after lockdown ends.
- I could have facilitated access to on-line information immediately.



Youth Ministry

I AM OFTEN told there are no young people in this parish, which is why 'we' don't do anything. I sat and thought about a parish I know well. On the surface it appears there are not many young people, a couple who pop back when they are home from University and three or four who are late primary school age. So, where are they? Are there really none? When I thought about the families in this parish, I realised there were another fifteen or so that do not come to Mass. Does the fact that they do not come mean they are not part of the community? Definitely not!

Although this piece will focus on school aged young people, youth doesn't stop there. There are plans to carry this mission forward with post school age young adults.

Youth ministry is for *all* young people, whether or not they, (or their family members), attend Mass, including those who are not Catholic. Pope Francis talks about our responsibility to build a sense of fraternity in his encyclical '*Fratelli Tutti*'. Although he focuses on the wider community and embracing different approaches to life, I feel there are a lot of points we can take into our communities to encourage young people who live within our parish, to feel part of our Catholic family.

There is an interesting piece of research called 'Complex Catholicism', (by Camino House), that looked at the approach of a group of young Catholics. The research

concluded they there are three groups: apologist, abstainers, and assimilators. Very briefly: Apologists are those that attend Mass and embrace parish life; Abstainers perhaps take part in some parish activities but are unsure of how they express their faith, and Assimilators - those that would go as far as not calling themselves Catholic but show core Catholic values without realising it. This latter group tend to be very pro-active in social justice. So in thinking about reaching out to our young people, we need to think about a range of activities and events that reach out to all. Depending on your parish you may choose to prioritise different groups.

I would also like to remind us that we are here to accompany our young people. We are encouraged to start with the young people from where they are. It is their spiritual journey that we are privileged to accompany them on. It is worth asking yourself: what is youth ministry and what does it mean to me? It is interesting to hear there are a wide range of definitions. Youth ministry to me is a chance to extend God's love and to share his truth as we walk shoulder to shoulder with young people. Love would be worthless if it is kept to oneself, it only has value if it is shared and enjoyed by many. A charity called 'Million Minutes' did some research on this and concluded four approaches to accompaniment: directive, purposeful, passive and adventurous. It is worth exploring them. 'Directive' and 'purposeful' have a clear direction and route to the final destination. Perhaps our young people are asking for us to take either a 'passive' or 'adventurous' journey.

The research has helped me to think about how I approach youth ministry in the diocese. It has been a challenge with COVID. I often feel limited as to how I can reach the young people across the diocese. I was employed to organise events at deanery and diocesan level, to support parishes to reach out to young people in their communities, but this was, and is, a challenge in this environment. So, like us all, I prayed, I built networks with people from other dioceses and began to put a plan together. I started out creating online youth services. It was a chance to link with young people across the diocese. I used links to encourage young people to offer reflections. My initial motive at that stage was simply to reach out and see what response I would get. What I did not expect was to start a journey of accompaniment with some young people. It has been incredible seeing them challenged spiritually, watching them deepen their understanding when reflecting on a piece of scripture, or considering a Christmas tradition they have possibly taken for granted.

Trying to take myself back to the research models, I started to experiment with different ways to reach out to the young people of our diocese. I worked with 'One Hope Project' to offer a series of sessions encouraging young people to explore their faith. This then gave me confidence to experiment by facilitating a drama and later a dance course. These courses aimed to incorporate *kerygma*, (the basic sharing of who Jesus is and what he has done for us), but not put it at the forefront of the session. Next half term I hope to reach out to the teenagers with a series of talks around the social justice theme, called 'Youth Faith in Action'.

I am conscious that I am currently offering events that I feel young people are interested in. The hope is that youth events will move into a process where we can be guided by the young people, to offer them what *they* want. As the number of young people joining in events starts to increase, then we will be in a better position to ask them what they would like.

I feel that youth ministry is a careful balance of several factors: the parents, teachers and the young people themselves. We know that parents are the main educators of faith to our young people, closely behind are the schoolteachers, key adults in their lives and people in the parish. What is most important, is that we are all here to accompany the young person through their spiritual journey.

I started this with theory, ways to guide me through an unknown territory, but we must not forget that the Holy Spirit and prayer underpin youth ministry in our diocese.



**'Youth
ministry...
is a chance to
extend God's love
and to share his
truth as we walk
shoulder to
shoulder with
young people'.**

**Everyone has gifts to
offer so if you are inter-
ested in supporting our
mission with young
people contact:
youth@prcdtr.org.uk**

Spirit Led Encounter



***‘It was
as if my
eyes were
opened...’***



Reflection :-

I couldn't believe that I had never spoken about faith on a pastoral visit before...

Maybe other people don't either when visiting?

PASTORAL VISITS ARE always a joy and I've done a fair few of these in my time! A pastoral visit is one which is made to anyone whom the parish feels has need of it – the bereaved, the sick, the lonely, the housebound, to name but a few. I think it's fair to say that by their very nature they usually bring as much joy to the visitor as the visited.

And so I have a few people on my 'list' who I visit on regular basis – in 'normal' times that is, not during a COVID national lockdown, of course. Having become involved with the Vicariate for Evangelisation & Catechesis and completed the ***'Mission Made Possible'*** course, I had much to reflect upon. And one of my reflections was that I never actually discussed faith on any of my pastoral visits. It was as if my eyes were opened...

And so on my very next visit, I made up my mind to do precisely that. The lady in question, Celia, was bereaved and still missed her husband terribly. We usually had a lovely chat with her telling me that she was still struggling with being alone. However, on this particular occasion, it seemed that my prayers to the Holy Spirit had been answered because after some initial small talk she, (very unusually), asked me:

“You're at the church every morning aren't you? (I'm a Sacristan and server). What makes you want to do that every day then?”

I was delighted to be given such a good opening! *Thank you, Holy Spirit*, I silently prayed. *Please now just give me the right words to answer her!*

I explained that I went every day and did what I did there, because my faith was the basis of my life. I told her about the absolute truth of our Lord Jesus Christ who came to show us the right way to live our lives and who died for us.

“So you really believe all that?”, she asked me, a look of wonder on her face.

I explained that I did and went on to say that Jesus could help her too. “He is the hope of all and is waiting for you, Celia, to invite him into your life”. If she did, I went on, he would walk with her every day and her life would be complete. She should start by praying and I would also pray for

‘Give me the right words...’

She seemed so much brighter, happier and encouraged by our conversation. Since then, she has asked me further questions, especially about the promise of eternal life.

Note:

Names have been changed to protect identity

Marriage & Family Life

MARRIAGE PREPARATION - Despite the pandemic, couples are still preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage in Church. The time of preparation, although there may be uncertainty over the 'When?' and 'How?' and 'How many guests?' is a time of opportunity. As you prepare, you can learn how to love even more deeply as a couple and enter even more deeply into relationship with God who *is* Love.

Your priest or deacon may suggest a programme of preparation as well as giving his own instruction. '*Engaged*,' Catholic marriage preparation from **SmartLoving UK**, <https://smartloving.org/engaged/> as recommended in our Diocese, is available online with a sponsor couple to support you. It is also available in a group or couple-to-couple mentored format depending on Covid restrictions. It will provide you with the tools to make your marriage even more successful. Soundly based on Church teaching, it looks to Christian marriage as an image of the love of the Bridegroom Christ for His bride the Church, and it introduces the wisdom of St John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body.' It also uses contemporary psychological and relationship insights to help you navigate the transition to marriage and family life. It is faithful to Church teaching while respecting partners who may not be Catholic or Christian. Many couples in the Diocese have now been through the course and report having gained new insights into their relationship as well as feeling pleased that their marriage was treated as important and worth supporting in this way.

Other forms of preparation online include: **pre-Cana** <https://catholicmarriageprep.com> and **Marriage Care** preparation <https://www.marriagecare.org.uk/get-involved/marriage-preparation/> as well as **Engaged Encounter**, from World Wide Marriage Encounter <https://engaged-encounter.org.uk> For more information also contact the Vicariate for Evangelisation & Catechesis.

Marriage Enrichment—We reap benefits when we give time and effort to our marriage. **SmartLoving** (see above) provide online information and courses to enrich your marriage and to help marriages in difficulty.

For marriages which are in crisis: **Retrouvaille** at <https://www.retrouvaille.org.uk> has been a source of long lasting help. Couples have reported marriages being brought back from the brink of breakdown through

Family life and Spirituality -Every family is a precious little part of the Church and the Church offers many resources to support family life and spirituality, from preparation for Catholic marriage, to help with fertility (from a network of qualified and experienced fertility awareness teachers), or anxieties about an 'unplanned' pregnancy, guidance on sacramental preparation, help for families in difficulty and inspiration for grandparents and godparents passing the faith on to their grandchildren.



The Family Prayer Box

Hundreds of families in the Diocese have had these wooden boxes, which include statues, a rosary, a battery candle and prayer books, and which foster prayer among family members. To find out more about the boxes contact:

[deborah.vankroonenburg](mailto:deborah.vankroonenburg@pcrdtr.org.uk)

@pcrdtr.org.uk

Please get in touch if you would like to know more about any of these activities.

Evangelising through a lens!



'I am sure that the Lord has been providing more encouragement for my friend and brother'.

For help in
discipleship see:

www.genesismission.co.uk



LAST CHINESE NEW YEAR we went to London to see my daughter and I remember thinking that this would be a wonderful family time ie time off. I think I may have even said that I am not going to look for an encounter – that I would focus on my family. Well, the Lord had other plans!

I had missed seeing a particular dragon dance and wandered back to a noisy crowd outside a restaurant where a 'dragon' was leaping, sweeping, shimmying and shaking when I became aware of a peculiar looking gadget above my head. It was a cylindrical camera in the shape of a telescope. Being short I couldn't see very well, so made a comment to the man who owned the gadget behind me. My interest in his camera led us on to quite a conversation!

Peculiarly, when he asked what I did, I said that I collected people. I don't know where that came from but I explained that I volunteered in the church. He cheerfully told me that he was a Catholic and asked whether I had gone to church at Christmas. (I felt nudged by the Holy Spirit at this point.) As we had been chatting some time, he clearly felt happy to open up to me.

'I said that I collected people...'

Suddenly, my friend's face changed and he worriedly asked whether it was true that whatever we do here on earth really affects what happens to us after we die.

"Yes!" I replied "but that's why we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation which allows us to start over". I explained that Jesus knows us, loves us and knows that we struggle.

"Does he?" he asked.

"Of course – he made us; he knows everything about us and still loves us".

I wanted him to know the love of Jesus for him... we spoke more and I said that I would pray for him.

"Oh, will you?" he said. "In fact", I said, I will pray with you here and now. So, on the periphery of the lion dance in China Town, with a very noisy throng, we got very close with my lips to his ear and prayed. We prayed the 'Our Father' together and as I was coming away, he pulled me close again and said, "and the Hail Mary".

His final remark was "I SO needed that", he looked less worried now and more peaceful and his smile returned. We parted company with me telling him that I would always pray for him and yes, I still do. I had just collected someone.

Reflecting on this encounter afterwards, I realised that there was a whole lot more I could have asked or that we could have spoken about but I was also being nudged by my family to hurry up (they had been patiently waiting some metres away and I had caught their glance). I am sure that the Lord has been providing more encouragement for my friend and brother as he needs it and, that is my prayer. We didn't swap numbers but I carry him in my heart and hope that he has found peace through our Church, through the sacraments and through a personal relationship with our loving Lord Jesus.

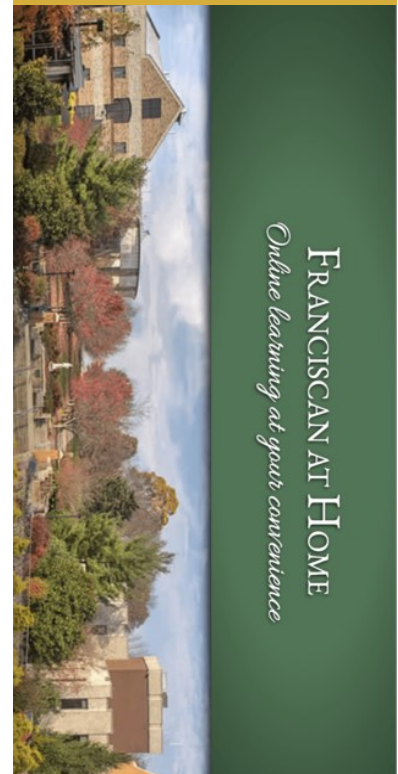
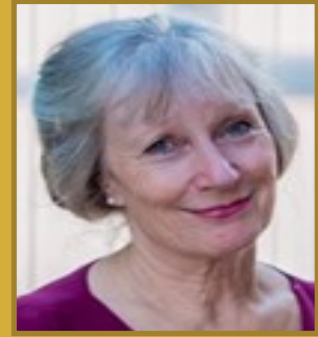
Franciscan at Home

'SPEAKING TRUTH WITH LOVE,'

Franciscan at Home workshops bring us closer to God the Father, to Jesus Christ the Son and to the Holy Spirit, and draw us into a new appreciation of being the body of Christ, His Church. Join a group, or take part as an individual, and enjoy one of the many courses which will open up your faith in new and deeper ways. Listen to the speakers proclaim Church teaching, against a backdrop of Christian art, literature and tradition, and share thoughts on the workshop tasks as you discover new insights. Come into closer communion with Jesus Christ and learn new ways to communicate the exciting truths of the faith with others. At present all the groups meet online, which makes distance no object and provides opportunities to share the growth of faith with others from around the Diocese. Get in touch to find out about a group who will make you welcome, or work on your own, while having an ongoing conversation with a mentor. If you would like to know more about taking part, graduates of the workshops will be happy to tell you about the ways in which their lives have been changed by the topics they have undertaken.

Doing the workshops will also give you confidence and inspiration to 'speak truth with love' yourself, to share your faith with others and 'put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ.'

Many of the 'tracks' are oriented to ministries or roles in the Church, workplace or family; for example the ministry of Reader, Parish Catechist or Welcomer or the role of a parent, health professional or carer. Any workshops can be undertaken, however, just as it engages and inspires you, to help you and all those you encounter to grow ever more deeply in love for the Lord.



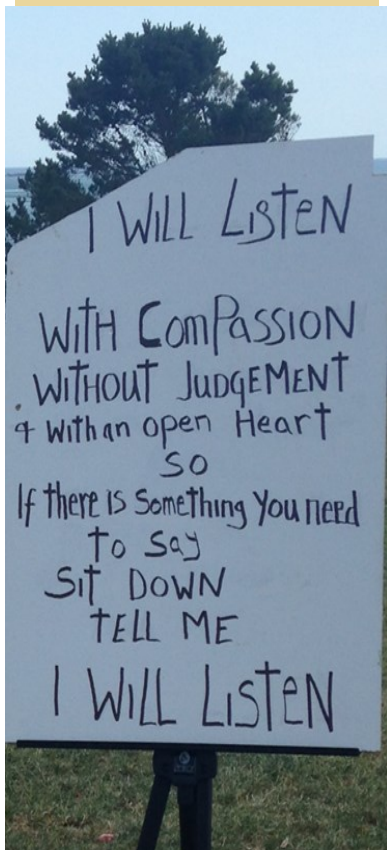
To learn more about the experience of learning with Franciscan at Home, to register, or for help setting up an online group please contact :

**Debrah.vanKroonenburg
@predtr.org.uk**

Listening Chairs - A Cemetery Encounter



*'Jesus is the
ultimate
conqueror'*



I ASKED THE Lord in prayer that morning, 'Where should I go to find the suffering, the lost, the lonely?' Into my head popped – the cemetery! Perfect! I love graveyards anyway and often visit, to pray for the dead. I ask them to rally up like a great army and support our work on earth. At the same time I hope that one day in the future someone might stop beside my grave and say the Rosary in good Catholic form!

I took my deckchairs and my sign and set up in a sunny spot, there were a few cars parked up and I could hear voices in the distance but I couldn't see anyone. Full of trust I sat and prayed. 'Heavenly Father, you know who is meant to sit in this chair today, bring them to me. I am ready.'

My sign reads:

I WILL LISTEN.

WITH COMPASSION, WITHOUT JUDGEMENT AND WITH AN OPEN HEART. SO, IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU NEED TO SAY, SIT DOWN, TELL ME, I WILL LISTEN.

I waited. A few people passed and we exchanged pleasantries. People are always surprised and encouraging when they see the message, but no-one sat. I started a Rosary. The sun was warm and I was nodding a little. I am not sure what alerted me, but I opened my eyes to see a small lady in a safari sunhat, with a long lens camera around her neck, walking towards me.

"I focused your sign through my lens to see what it says, and I decided I would come and sit with you."

"Welcome", I said.

"I won't be able to speak." Her lips were tight and there was emotion in her voice. I started to pray silently that she might open up.

"That's OK, sit as long as you like, it's a beautiful spot. My name is Michele, what's yours?"

"Denise"

We sat for a while in silence, I am mindful not to start a conversation that will lead her away from the reason she sat down, so I waited, continuing with my prayer.

"Are you a Christian?" she asked.

"I am" I am always delighted when people pick up on this, because the only clue is that the 't's on my sign are crossed like a CROSS.

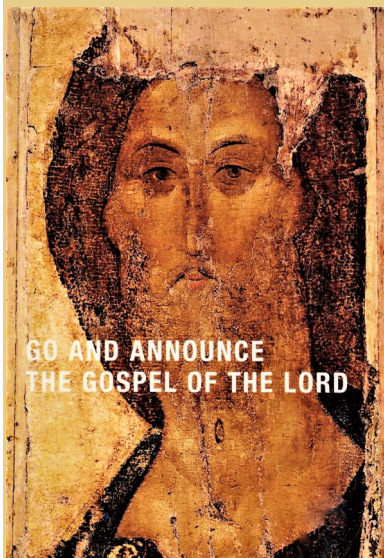
"I am a Christian but I'm struggling at the moment."

"Tell me about that."

"Ten years ago my husband and I gave up everything and started a mission for the homeless. It is a very well-known established mission now, but we started in a dilapidated hall on an infamous street with nothing. But we knew we had to do it and we trusted that it was what God wanted. We had so many affirmations from the Lord on the way, (she then told me some truly extraordinary incidents). We put a crucifix over the door and scripture on the walls and all of our volunteers were Christians too. We made sandwiches and hot drinks and as the people came we would teach them to pray and read the Bible. We toiled and overcame so many challenges. There were times we just wanted to give up but we would pray and know we must continue. As time went on the demands grew greater. Gradually the work increased and the mission grew as more and more people came and we branched out into other areas – charity shops, (goodwill stores) to help with funding and getting involved with other agencies. We were headed for charitable status and we didn't have the knowledge or the time needed to cope with the growing administration. Eventually we realised we needed more help and we were persuaded by two of our trusted friends to form a committee. After a time, the committee began making more and more of the decisions and my husband and I became concerned that the basic Christian ethos was being lost. The two trusted friends took over and after eight years we could bear it no longer



Listening chairs - A cemetery encounter



13

It was a terrible decision to make as we had given so much of our lives.

Two years on we still feel angry and very bitter. We feel like we wasted eight years of our lives. We have stopped going to church and I keep asking God ‘WHY has this happened? WHY would you do this to us?’”

As my companion was speaking, I was praying silently. I could hear her sadness and disappointment but also an anger and resentment that was crippling her life. She told me also about her early life with a mother who was unable to show her any love and her two broken marriages to abusive husbands. I had shared a little of my own story and call to mission. I felt we had established a good level of rapport, understanding and trust. I so badly wanted to help her. It would have been easy to sympathise and help her to feel justified in her withdrawal from her church and her understandable anger against the trusted friends who she felt had betrayed her, but I knew I would only be giving platitudes and short term comfort that held no promise or progress. I was being prompted to speak words of loving truth.

“Denise,” I said, “eight years of your life you gave to help others. You fed them, taught them to pray and read the Bible with them. How can you possibly think that that was a waste of time? You will have helped countless people. For all you know lives have been transformed by your loving heart. You may not see it this side of heaven, but surely you know that NOTHING you do in the Lord’s name is wasted?! Now tell me, who did you do it for? Was it for yourself?”

“No not for ourselves, for God and for others. That is why I cannot understand why God has let this happen”

“Denise, you have to stop asking ‘WHY.’ ‘Why’ is a victim question. ‘Why’ is paralysing you. We are *not* victims. We, are VICTORS, CONQUERERS – Why? Because Jesus is

the ultimate CONQUEROR. He took the ultimate VICTORY for US. The question you should be asking is WHAT? As in, ‘Lord, what’s next?’ And HOW, as in, ‘Lord, how will I do it?’ Denise, the world lacks people like you who are willing to make personal sacrifice in order to proclaim Jesus and bring him souls. Do you really believe that a loving God who willingly died to save you, and blessed you with such an awesome opportunity to serve him, would abandon you? We are Jesus’ disciples and our mission does not end on this earth until we take our final breath. You have a new mission but you need to find it and the only way you are going to discover it is to go back to church, get among the people, and start praying for the way forward, not for answers that keep you stuck in a place of misery.”

Denise was quiet at this point and then she said, “I can’t go back to church, because one of the men who betrayed us is a leader there. A couple of weeks ago I bumped into him at the supermarket and I really laid into him. I let it all out. I regret it really but it’s too late, the damage is done. You see, I can’t possibly go back after that”

“Denise, you’re not going to like this, but you know what you have to do, there is a much bigger picture to consider.”

She knew what was coming, and I could see the alarm registering in her expression...

“I have to forgive, don’t I? I have to let it go in order to start again. And I have to apologise for confronting him.”

“You know it, Denise For Jesus. Shall we pray?”

“For courage,” she replied...

Note: Names have been changed to protect identity

CONTACT US:



Fr. Jonathan Bielawski

jonathan.bielawski@predtr.org.uk



Michele Thompson

michele.thompson@predtr.org.uk



Joe Harrison

joe.harrison@predtr.org.uk



Pippa Worth

pippa.worth@predtr.org.uk



Julia Beacroft

julia.beacroft@predtr.org.uk



Deborah Van Kroonenburg

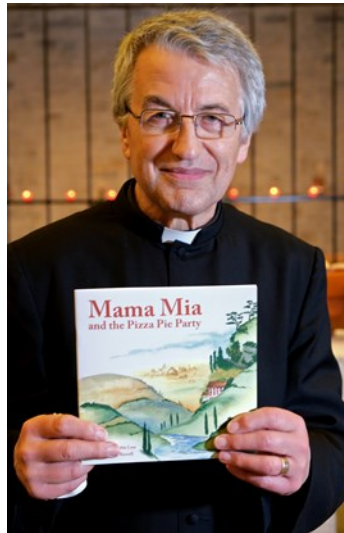
Deborah.vanKroonenburg@predtr.org.uk



Saskia Hogbin

saskia.hogbin@predtr.org.uk

MAMA MIA



FR. ROBBIE LOW, assistant priest at St. Mary & St. Petroc, Bodmin, has written a children's book called, '**Mama Mia and the Pizza Pie Party**'. His friend and neighbour, artist Jan Burrell, has beautifully illustrated it. The thirty-two page full colour book was published on December 13th 2020 and by the New Year had sold enough copies to cover costs and raise over **£2,000** for charities. Already £1,000 has gone to Mary's Meals and a further £1,000 to Aid to the Church in Need's work with children in war zones.

The book, described by Bishop Mark O'Toole as 'a tender reminder of the importance of family, faith, friendship and the sharing of good food' is set in 1950s Italy in a village above Rome. In it you learn of a little Italian and get a fantastic authentic pizza recipe to make with your children and grandchildren.

Copies £6.50 inc. postage, are available via Fr. Robbie's website www.stpaulrepository.com where you can get a full preview of the book.

Fr. Robbie says: *'I have always written stories for children and was persuaded to publish this one. Delighted by the result and to be of some help to disadvantaged children through these wonderful charities'*.

Fr. Robbie is now working on a Christmas story for next year.

Sat 27th Feb 2021

11am - 3pm

Stay Awake
Adore † Abide † Arise

CONTACT;

stayawakejc19@

gmail.com

Tel: 07531

266224



DIARY DATE:

Saturday 1st May. MICHAEL DOPP

International Speaker (Founder of Mission of the Redeemer ministries)

EVANGELISATION: Talk and workshop for Clergy and Laity.

11 - 12noon & 1 - 2pm.

More details to follow in your newsletters.

