



YEAR OF FAITH 2012-2013

THE WEAVINGS

Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Department for Spirituality

July 2013

A Spiritual Legacy (6)

In 1965, Pope Paul VI promulgated a document that looked at how the Church might relate to the world and its peoples. It is called **Gaudium et Spes** (Joy and Hope) and is the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.

Gaudium et Spes recognised that the human family was living through a period of rapid change with the introduction of new technologies. We might well think that, if this was the situation in the 1960s, it is even more true in our own day.

It also acknowledges that technology and change can bring great good – but can also be used in ways that damage people.

There is also great inequality—which, again, has not gone away and, in some ways, has increased.

‘Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the worlds citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before has humanity had so keen an understanding of freedom, yet at the same time new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance.’ (Paragraph 4)

Think about these words written almost 50 years ago. Where have improvements been made—and where is there work still to be done?

Reflect too on human beings made in the image and likeness of God— how might these ‘torments’ and ‘slavery’ be seen as damaging that dignity—how can they even be seen as sinful?

‘The family is a kind of school of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the painstaking cooperation of parents in the education of their children.’ (Para 52)

Reflect on the parts your own parents played in your religious and spiritual development—how they helped you to become the person you are now. How can we support parents and families as they help

their children to develop in their love of God and in their prayer and spiritual lives?

‘Christians who take an active part in present-day socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world.

In these activities let them, either as individuals or as members of groups, give a shining example.’ (Para 72)

Ponder some of the writings from the scriptures that encourage Christians to work for justice, peace and prosperity. How does it reflect Jesus’ commands to love God and to love our neighbour?

We (the Council Fathers) can justly consider that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping. (Para 31)

What are the reasons for living and for hoping? How can we be people who offer those reasons to our own and to future generations? 



Pilgrimage to Holy Island

There was frustration all round when bookings for the **Holy Island pilgrimage on Saturday 13 July** were disrupted when PayPal (the online payment system) decided that the account must be being used for money laundering and blocked it! The glitches are now sorted and tickets are still available.

Visit <http://holyislandpilgrimage2013.info> to book for what promises to be an excellent day.



Contact Details

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Becoming a (reluctant) Hidden House

When Anne-Marie Lavelle, Chaplain to English Martyrs School in Hartlepool was struck down with shingles, she swapped a very busy and fulfilling ministry for one that is more hidden... becoming a temporary **Hidden House of Prayer**. We asked her to share some reflections on the experience.

Inconvenience is just so inconvenient! What can be more inconvenient than being abruptly stopped in your tracks when you're so busy? The result of this action was one of utter frustration and panic. "I am too busy to be ill and will let too many people down if I am off for two weeks" I told the doctor as she wrote the note and told me I had the shingles!

Whilst this came at one of my busiest times of year, the generosity and care from other people has been such a blessing. In amongst all this I have also received some very challenging yet comforting words about slowing down and just "be" for two weeks.

I have my Hidden House of Prayer and have tried to make the most of this opportunity. God has allowed this inconvenience to occur so he must have something important to say or do during this time.

I received some excellent thoughts from my spiritual director about using this

time for prayer, to make the transition from Martha to Mary, to refocus my attention not on the *doing* but the *being* in what is an exceptionally busy time. It is like the desert experience of being "unclean, unclean!" These opportunities to pray, which are usually so rare, have allowed me to think of the lonely, the housebound, the sick. Those, who people tend not to think of too often. It has brought to light our reliance on the good will and generosity of others and our complete and utter reliance on God and his holy providence.

It has reaffirmed my love for Jesus in the Eucharist as I have not just been able to nip to Mass when I want to. My desire and need for him is apparent and confirmed that this is definitely something I cannot live without.

I have a little while longer to make the most of this Hidden House of Prayer that my simple abode has become. My spiritual director told me another story of the hyperactive novice charging round the monastery, until one day his novice master grabbed him by the shoulders and told him: 'don't just do something, stand there!'

Although this is quite a funny little analogy, this is literally what I feel God is saying to me, "Just stop! Be still! For just a little while, be still! I am in charge here." Who am I to not oblige? 

Prayer Walks



Walkers from parishes in Hartlepool pray on their walk around the Headland in early June

As summer approaches, more Walks have been added to the Prayer Walk section of the Diocesan website.

One of the new ones, alongside the River Wear in Durham could be combined with a visit to the Lindisfarne Gospel exhibition.

Visit: www.rcdhn.org.uk/spirituality/spirituality_walks.php. If you have a walk near you, send it in for inclusion on the website.

The final **Rehallowing the Land** before the summer will take place at St Cuthbert's, North Shields on Wednesday 10 July at 7pm.

Prayer Station of the Month

For the next three months, the Lindisfarne Gospels will be on exhibition in Durham—well worth a visit!

Our prayer station this month is inspired by them—at least, some of the incredible illustrations and what producing them might have done for the monks.

Colouring-in is something we leave behind in childhood. Those who have skill in art might continue and develop their talent but for most people it becomes something that can seem to be a waste of time!

And yet, calligraphy and illuminated manuscripts do not just look beautiful when they are complete. Taking time to form letters—to select colours—to

Contemplative Colouring



The Lindisfarne Gospels are full of beautiful illustrations—such as this Carpet Page.

Not only was this a work of art—
it was a work of prayer.

Choose one of the outlines
and a selection of colours.

Then find a quiet space to colour. It in,
Simply allow the work of your eyes—
your hands—your mind—your heart
to be a prayer.

painstakingly colour in an image—all can be very relaxing. If we do them with the intention of making it a prayer, we add a whole new dimension. We may not create a work of art by human standards but we offer God our time and willingness to create something that we hope will give him honour.

For your station, have a selection of images. Perhaps, in honour of Eadriht, the creator of the Lindisfarne Gospels, use celtic knots or artwork (search online for "celtic knots colouring").

Have felt tips and/or coloured pencils to hand. Invite people to colour in one of the images—taking their time—being aware of the movements of their hands—and the coordination with their eyes—their minds—and with their hearts. 