

“What can be done to help people accept and love each other? That is today’s major challenge!” (p.101) “What are most people really seeking? It is joy, and joy is what is so terribly missing. It is buried under the understandable preoccupation with staying in work and holding together the fragments of life. But it is tarnished even more by the frustrations built up by the images of an unattainable consumer culture which dominate commercial centres, television and the internet. There is not joy in any of this yet it is joy for which most people thirst. Joy springs up when people work together for unity and peace”(p.103) “Even in our time, it is still joy which attracts us. Jesus says, ‘I give you my joy so that your joy may become complete.’ The new evangelisation, it seems to me, doesn’t consist only in seeking personal conversion through announcing Jesus; it must invite people to enter into a community where people love each other. This means offering places where people celebrate together and experience a feeling of belonging. Joy comes from this sense of belonging to a community, of feeling good together despite our differences, of feeling that we are no longer alone with our problems and our griefs.” (p.105) “There is a danger in the sense of isolation which is so widespread today: the growth of sectarian movements is also a response to the huge need for belonging. A sect is a community which is closed in around the figure of a guru and built on fear. People join because they are afraid – of loneliness, of feeling lost, of going to hell – and they stay there for the same reasons, for fear of the consequences if they leave. These groups are shut off behind concrete walls. A healthy community must be open and help each of its members to grow in a real inner freedom. Hospitality is vital for any Christian community, because it teaches us to welcome each person as they are, humbly and with respect.” (p.106) “At the heart of society’s ills is a call to create more community. And Christians are surely invited to dare take the initiatives which will shine a new love into our troubled world.” (p.112) “At the end of this book, I dare to suggest that the mystery to which we are all called is to live like Jesus, who became small and weak. He is hidden in those who are humiliated, in the poorest the foolish and the weak of our societies, all those whom God has chosen to confound the intellectual and the powerful of the earth – and so, it has to be said, of the Church itself.” (p.145) – *all from “Signs of the Times” by Jean Vanier*

“Now we need to take the ‘deep breath of prayer’ so that we can discern how we, from the strength and comfort of our families, reach out to those who do not know Christ, so that they may experience the joy of the gospel. That is a very difficult challenge which requires patience and love. A favourite principle of Pope Francis, which he repeats time and again is that ‘time is greater than space. He means by this rather enigmatic phrase that we should go slowly so that what we build will last.” - *from the address of Archbishop Malcolm McMahon to the Supreme Council of the KSG 2014.*

There are two main written sources for our work this year sacred scripture and “*Evangelii Gaudium*”, (“The Joy of the Gospel”) the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, and we have linked them together here under certain ‘themes’ which might be useful for group sessions. We have also referred to the Faith and Light programme for the coming year called “*Missionaries of Joy*”, which is available on our own web-site. We use much of the material and work it in to our group session work and liturgies. Some texts from scripture and the

Pope might be needed for more than one section. We might divide the programme according to the four liturgies thus, and suggest some of the enclosed for group session work. It is also clear that this will be a ‘developing’ programme, with different groups inserting their own sessions and ideas as they see fit. These will all be recorded so that at the end we may have a comprehensive account of all the work undertaken by everyone.

The basic message of our project can be summed up in these words of Pope Francis from “Evangelii Gaudium” : ‘On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you’. (# 164)

Nottingham Group – before Session 1

Mass at the Poor Clares Convent, Bulwell – January 15 2015

Hymn I the Lord of sea and sky

Introduction

Reader 1 A very Happy New Year to everyone and especially to our dear sisters here in the convent

Reader 2 This year we are going to be thinking about what Pope Francis tells us we should be – messengers of joy

Reader 1 We hope that in the coming weeks we will have some lovely times together when we try to think about what that means

Reader 2 We will be looking at messages – what are they for? Who sends them to whom? How are they sent?

Reader 1 Then we will be thinking about the messengers - who are they? Who sends them and why?

Reader 2 On our next club night we will be looking at the DVD of a play that was written many years ago called “Some Kind of Message” – it’s very funny, but it also has a message for us

Reader 1 Pope Francis has told us what the most important message we can receive is: Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you

Reader 2 Today at Mass we will be thinking about two messages from God

Reader 1 Six hundred years before Jesus was born, God chose some very special people called prophets to speak his message to his people: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, Amos and many more

- Reader 2 The word ‘prophet’ means to speak on behalf of someone else. During the year, we shall see some of the ‘scrapes’ that these men got into because of the message God asked them to speak
- Reader 1 So today we will listen to some words from God that he spoke through Isaiah
- Reader 2 And then we will listen again to the most famous message of all: the message of God to Mary, asking her to become the mother of Jesus
- Reader 1 We have heard this so many times and yet it is still so moving and beautiful, especially bearing in mind Mary’s answer: “I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me”.

Rite of Penance

But first we tell God we are all very sorry for the times **we** have not listened to his messages to us and done what he asked of us. O my God because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and with your help I will not sin again

Prayer

Dear Father, we come together at Mass to hear your voice, your message and to receive your life in Jesus your Son. Help us to listen to what you are trying to say to us and to do what you ask of us every day. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

First Reading A reading from the prophet Isaiah

These are God’s words – the God who made the sky and the firm and solid earth, a home for people to live in: I am God, there is no other. My word is clear, making plain what is true and right. I do not speak in the dark; I do not hide what I mean to say. I say: turn to me for rescue, come back to me, honour and love me as I have loved you. This is the word of the Lord

Psalm The response is: O Lord open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise

Be merciful to me O God,
blot out all the wrong I have done;
I trust your love and kindness;
I thank you for all your goodness to me

I know the wrong I have done,
I can’t forget it.
I am sorry for the things I have done,
for the hurt I have caused you and others

You have searched the depth of my being;
 you know what is deep within me;
 give me again a pure heart
 and a steadfast spirit to sustain me

Let me know the joy of being rescued by you;
 of having you with me always;
 May I tell of your goodness to me,
 and speak your praise for ever

Gospel A reading from the holy gospel according to St.Luke

God sent his angel, Gabriel, to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to bring a message to a young woman who was engaged to a man called Joseph, and the woman's name was Mary. The angel went in and said to her: "Rejoice, Mary, you are God's friend, and the Lord is with you." Mary was very frightened by these words and asked herself what it all meant, but the angel said to her. "Mary, do not be afraid; something wonderful is going to happen to you; you are going to have a child, a son. You must call him Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High." Mary said: "But how can this happen to me? I am not married." The angel replied: "God's Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be filled with God's power. The child will be holy and will be called the Son of God. And to prove that nothing is impossible to God, your cousin, Elizabeth, though she is old, is going to have a son too." Mary said: "I am God's servant; let what you have said be done to me." This is the gospel of the Lord

Homily

Bidding Prayers

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Priest | Dear Father, please listen to us as we want to listen to you |
| Reader | We pray that we may all learn how to listen to you and each other, so that we may know what you want to say to us. Lord hear us |
| Reader | Help us to be joyful people, not mean, miserable or moody, so that other people will be drawn to you through our happiness at being your friends. Lord hear us |
| Reader | We pray for those people who do not listen to anyone, especially those who are trying to get them to change their minds for the sake of what is right. Lord hear us |
| Reader | We pray for peace in our world, for an end to all the killing of innocent people that has been going on everywhere. Our message to them is: stop and stop now. Lord hear us |

- Reader We thank you for our Loreto Club as we celebrate our 36th birthday – for all the friends we have met, for all the work we have done and for all the happiness we have shared. Lord hear us
- Reader We ask you to bless these sisters here in the convent; we thank you for their life of prayer and work and the message it sends to us, and we ask you to keep them strong and happy in your service. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for all our friends who have died and in particular today for Yvonne Livingston of the Sunshine Club who died suddenly last week. Give her peace and light with you for ever. Lord hear us
- Reader Now we ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary
- Priest In praying the prayer of the servant church we ask God particularly to help us to speak with the words of Jesus to everyone, so that his message will be heard everywhere:

Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the heart of Christ and live with the life of Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever.

Offertory Hymn

All that I am

Prayer over the gifts

- Priest Dear Father, we bring you this bread; we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves. Help us always to make our lives an offering of praise and thanks to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

Preface

- Priest God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you through Jesus Christ who is our Lord. From the very beginning of time you spoke a message to your people in the things that you did for them, but so often they did not listen or take any notice of you. Then you sent them Jesus your Son, who is your last Word to us. Jesus came to speak your Word but also to be your Word, to show us how to live in your way every day. And so we thank you with all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy

Priest Dear Father, we thank you for all you have been to us, all that you are to us
and all that you will be, in Jesus Christ our Lord

Blessing

Final Hymn Follow me

Session 1 *Some Kind of Message*

Show DVD of “Some Kind of Message”. This was a play performed by children and adults in Mickelover and Hinckley, and takes the form of a modern parable. As we are watching it, we need to ask the following questions: What sort of ‘message’ was being given here, by whom to whom? Whom is it really intended for? What do you think the real message of the play might be? Have a discussion after the DVD.

Session 2 *Messages and Messengers*

What sort of messages and messengers can you think of? Eg. postmen, newspaper journalists, newsreaders on TV, subscribers to twitter, facebook and social media. ‘Angels’ –who are they and what do they do? Why do they do it? Think about other means of communication – gossip, Chinese whispers, sign language, Makaton, billboards, adverts on TV (can you think of any? If you can, that means they were successful in communicating it to you –eg. “should have gone to specsavers”, “because you’re worth it” etc.) We defined a message as: ‘a usually short communication, transmitted by words, signals or other means, from one person, station or group to another’.

The Hinckley group played the Chinese whispers game, which caused great amusement, and also got people into small groups showing them different pictures of how to share a message to see if they could identify them: Talking, shouting, sending a letter (‘snail mail’!) text message, phone, video chat, singing a song, flags, hand signals, morse code, a book (THE Book), jungle drums, semaphore, secret code, email, mime, i-message, paper plane, message in a bottle, lights signals, smoke signals or of course through actions.

The Derby group likewise played the Chinese whispers game, using the same message: “some kind of message”. We made a collage of positive messages and emotions. eg. joy and happiness, courage, hope, sharing, love and fun. Next time we will bring iPads and find out how to set up a ‘hot spot’!

Session 3 *Signs and Symbols*

Who knows Makaton? How many of the group use it and when? Would you like to give us a message using it? Let’s see if we can guess what it is? Can you teach us all some basic signs and symbols in Makaton? (*The should be a great opportunity for our special friends to contribute and teach the rest of us something*) Let us try to learn the ‘Our Father’ in Makaton and then use it together at each of our Masses. Fr.Frank made a big mistake in Llandudno

some years ago when Paul Muursepp refused to get out of the bus one evening and made the sign for 'home', which Fr. Frank thought meant 'prayers' – an hour later, he realised the mistake he had made! In Nottingham, Eddie showed himself to be something of an expert and gave us all a lesson.

Can you think of any messages you have seen around the town? (take photos of billboards and show them). Bloopers –getting the message wrong – each week at the end of the session we might have a competition to see who has discovered the most silly message. Here are some examples from Hinckley and the USA!

- “Best sausage supper in St. Louis. Come and eat Pastor Thomas Ressler”
- “Do you know what hell is? Come and hear our preacher”
- “What is missing from Ch ch? UR”
- “Forbidden fruits create many jams”
- “Please drop your cigarette butts on the ground. The fish crawl out at night to smoke them and we are trying to get them to quit”
- “When flooded, turn around; don't drown”
- “Fish and Nips”
- “No trespassing without permission”
- “Open seven days a week and weekends”
- “Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves”
- There are some questions that cannot be answered by Google
- Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the snake and the snake didn't have a leg to stand on
- Honk if you , love Jesus; text while driving if you want to meet him
- Church parking - trespassers will be baptised
- Whoever is praying for snow please stop
- Read the Bible; it's user friendly plus we offer tech support here on Sundays
- Every day above ground is a good one
- Repent now and avoid the rush on doomsday
- Down in the mouth? Time for a faith lift!

The Body Language game – think of how we communicate something to others just in the way we sit, stand, shake hands (limply or strongly) kiss / embrace, turn away or towards each other, smile or frown. How many people have seen ‘continental’ people using their hands when they speak? Act out people showing signs of nerves, being bored, sad, happy, falling out, making up, using their hands to make gestures, eg. waving, clapping, making a fist etc.

Charades – get two teams and play a game of charades, using simple words as film, book, play or song titles, cities, etc., and keep the score or who wins. This could go on for some time! titles such as: ‘The Longest Day’, ‘The Bible’, ‘Clockwork Orange’, ‘Robin Hood’, ‘Sound of Music’, ‘Wind in the Willows’, ‘Somewhere over the Rainbow’, ‘Catch a falling star’, ‘Forget me not’, ‘Birdie song’, etc. In Nottingham, Jonathan knew nearly every film and song title even before we had finished miming it! What is a messenger and what do they do? Can you think of any? How do we ‘deliver’ messages today – eg. phone, text, face-book – how many people in the group use social media and ask them to explain how it works. In between Sessions 4 and 5 the Hinckley group did a session on their own on pigs and looked at the DVD of a specially written play called ‘Pigs Might Fly’. Our conclusion to the evening was that even animals can give ‘messages’ to us and to each other.

Session 4 *Messengers in the Bible – prophets and angels*

Can we think of any ‘messengers’ from the Bible and what happened to them? – eg. ‘angels’, prophets – tell their stories, eg. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Amos – nb. They were reluctant at first.: Let us look at the call of the prophet Jeremiah:

God spoke to me: “before you were born, I chose you and set you apart, appointed you to speak in my name to the whole world.” I said, “but God, I am too young; I don’t know how to speak to people at all.” God’s answer came clear: “Don’t talk like that! You shall go to whomever I send you! You shall speak whatever I tell you!” Don’t be afraid of anybody – I am with you; I am looking after you!” God touched my mouth with his hand and told me: “Look I have given you the power to speak my words, power over the whole world, to pluck up and plant to break down and build up.”

Then there was Amos..... The reading we are about to hear is from the prophet Amos. We don't know too much about Amos, except that he was a farmer and lived about 760 years before Our Lord was born. At that time, the kingdom of Israel was in fact two kingdoms - the north and the south. The north was very rich and the south was very poor. The people of the north were so engrossed in their luxury, in getting on, in 'keeping up with the Joneses' as we might call it, that nobody really bothered about what was happening outside, or about God who loved them - they just forgot him, and prayed when they felt like it.

Enter people swanning around and lying about, eating and drinking

They were so preoccupied with themselves, what they wanted to have, what they wanted to do, that they completely forgot about God and his love for them. They spent their time enjoying themselves, eating big meals, making lots of money, and taking advantage of other people so that they could make more for themselves.

Show people taking from others and shooing them away

God was angry with them, and sent a man called Amos to warn them. He was not a special holy man, but a shepherd from down south, a bit rough and ready, but not afraid to do what God had asked him. Amos was a southerner and God got hold of him and told him to go up north and warn the king and the people that they better watch out - if they kept ignoring God, something terrible might happen to them. So Amos went and spoke to Amaziah, the temple priest. Needless to say, Amaziah and friends took not one bit of notice.

Reader 1 A reading from the prophet Amos. Amos was a farmer dealing in sheep and cattle and sycamore figs in the southern city of Tekoa. God sent him to the royal temple, and Amaziah tried to get rid of him.

Amaziah Go back to the south you visionary and earn your living by preaching there. And don't you ever come back to Bethel with your wild talk. This is a royal city, with a royal temple and a royal palace.

Amos Look, I'm not a professional prophet; I was a cattleman, growing the fruit the poor eat. God seized me when I was out with the sheep and told me to give his message to the north. Now you listen to what God has to say to you.

Amos looks at the people, who ignore him

Amos Stop!

They look at him and laugh

Guest 1 Who is this chappie?

Guest 2 Looks a bit dirty and smelly to me

Amos God says stop! Woe to you, snug in your own world, safe from the outside, not thinking about anyone else. Lying on ivory beds and sprawling on divans.

He points at them

Amos God says stop! *(they all look surprised)*. Eating the best meat, the most-expensive cuts

He points at them again

Amos God says stop! Singing and dancing and drinking lots of wine

And again

Amos God says stop! And using the finest oil for anointing yourselves

And again

Amos *God says stop! You don't care about what's going to happen to you, so you will be the first to suffer. Stop! God has seen what you have done. You have trampled the common people down and made their lives difficult so that you can get more for yourselves. Shame on you. God will not forget what you have done. What about God, what about other people? God says, stop and think or you will be punished.*

He points at them accusingly and walks away. They look blank

What sort of 'message' was Amos trying to give them and why? How did they take it? It is clear that he and the other prophets were often called on to speak 'on behalf of' God words of warning (and sometimes words of comfort) to particular people at a particular time. The word 'prophet' means to 'speak on behalf of', although sometimes we think of it as referring to someone who can predict the future. In all these cases, the prophets were called by God to speak a message from him to his people – they were the first 'messengers' of the bible. What Amos 'foresaw' actually happened a hundred years later: the kingdom of the north had been captured by people from Assyria, and a little bit later the southern kingdom followed. Eventually the whole nation was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and shipped off there where they were kept in slavery for nearly 70 years. Amos was a farmer but Jeremiah was a poet and used more than words to convey his message. For example once he was outside Jerusalem and had a large pottery jar in his hand. He smashed it on the ground and said: "when you smash a jar like this, no one can mend it again. This is what God will do to this city and all those who live in it – he will smash it and bring it to ruin." God spoke to Jeremiah in his heart and told him what to do: 'go to the temple and speak to all the crowds. Tell them I everything I command you to tell them; keep nothing back. They may listen and change their ways; if they do, I will not send the disaster their present behaviour deserves. Tell them this from me: if you won't listen to me, live in my way, take note of what my servants the prophets tell you (which is just what you haven't done), then I will make this city the sort of city that the whole world will despise.' When he was arrested, Jeremiah said: "God sent me to speak against this temple and all this city. What I have said is what God told me to say. What you've got to do is clear – change your ways and listen to God's warning, then the disaster God speaks of may not happen. You can do what you like with me – I am at your mercy. But don't forget this: if you kill me, an innocent man, you will have to face the consequences of such a brutal act. What I said is what God sent me to say; I am sure of this."

So why did these 'prophets' have to speak like this? Let us remember the words of "Mother Mary"

It was not too long before his friends
 rejected him and turned to their own needs and ends
 forgot his love and his care for them
 lived for themselves and for what they could just gain and get
 Each time they turned away, and always spurned his love
 stopped listening to his voice so true, come from above.
 Don't reject me, I'm your Father, come back with all your heart.
 Turn to me again, I love you, we'll make a brand new start
 He sent them warnings down through the years
 his word ignored and it fell too soon on their deaf ears

the prophets, kings, and the angels came
they took no notice or heed and then confirmed his fears

What about “angels” – who are they and what do they do? We find many references to ‘angels’ in the Bible, and the word literally means, ‘messenger’ or ‘news giver’. Angels are spirits who live with God and are sent by him in bodily form to particular people and a particular time for a particular purpose. The name they are given is often something to do with the message they are sent to give. They are the creatures who are most like God and show forth his goodness, majesty and glory. They reflect his love, his beauty, his holiness and his power, and were created for his service and glory. Sometimes their function is to give a message and here are some examples of this:

Narrator This is a story about three people : a man called Zechariah, Mary, Jesus’ mother and Joseph her husband and it tells how they all heard a very special message from God through his angels. Zechariah was a priest working in the temple and he had a wife called Elizabeth. They went to church every week and followed the commandments of God, but they were both getting on in years. One day when Zechariah was in the temple burning incense before the Lord, God’s angel appeared to him. He was very frightened but the angel said to him:

Angel Zechariah do not be afraid. Your prayer has been heard and your wife Elizabeth will soon have a son and you must name him John. He will be your joy and your delight and everyone will be happy when he is born. God has chosen him to bring back many of his people to honour him again.

Zechariah But how can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is too old to have children

Angel I am Gabriel and I stand before God and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news

Narrator And then a wonderful thing happened. Elizabeth became pregnant and eventually gave birth to a son, who was, of course, John the Baptist. Meanwhile wonderful things were also happening a few miles away in Nazareth, where Gabriel went with more messages to give. He went to visit a young woman, to give her the most special message of all. She was engaged to a man called Joseph and was called Mary. The angel went in to her and said:

Angel Rejoice, Mary, you are special to God and he is with you

Narrator She was very scared when she heard this and asked herself what it meant but the angel went on:

Angel Here is God’s message: you are going to become pregnant and you will have a baby boy. You must call him, Jesus. He will be great and will be the Son of God

- Mary But how can this be? I am not married yet and you say I am going to have a child
- Angel God's power will come over you and then what we asks will happen. As well as this, your cousin Elizabeth is expecting a child too, even though she is old and he will be born soon. This is to show that nothing is impossible to God
- Narrator Mary replied with these beautiful words:
- Mary I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me
- Narrator The angel left her and then went to see her fiancé, Joseph. He had found out that Mary was pregnant and so thought he could not marry her because of the shame but the angel appeared to him in a dream and said:
- Angel Joseph, don't be afraid to marry Mary. God's power has brought this baby to life in her and she will have a son. You must call him Jesus. He is the one God has chosen to save his people from their sins
- Narrator When Joseph woke up, he took Mary home with him as his wife and some time later Jesus was born in the stable at Bethlehem. In the fields nearby there were some shepherds watching their sheep when God's angel appeared to them as well to tell them as well the beautiful message:
- Angel Do not be afraid. I bring you news of great joy. Today a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you; you will find the baby lying in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem.
- Narrator So the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Jesus and Mary and Joseph just as the angel said. Some time after three wise men came from the east. They had been to see King Herod about the new king that was born and were led by the stars to the stable. They brought precious gifts for the child but then, in a dream, they received a message not to go back to Herod, who was jealous of the child, so went home another way. Joseph too had another dream, when the angel of God came and spoke to him again
- Angel Get up and take your wife and child to Egypt. It is not safe to go home because Herod means to find the child and kill him.
- Narrator So Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt and stayed there until after Herod was dead and it was safe to return home to Nazareth

Here then we see these special 'messengers' the angels playing a very important part in the events surrounding Jesus' birth. From time to time they crop up in the story of Jesus as we shall see – protecting him when he is tempted by Satan in the desert, standing by the empty tomb after he rose from the dead, and protecting his friends, like Peter, when they got him out of jail.

Another ‘function’ of the angels is to look after us, to be what Pope Francis called recently our ‘travelling companions’ on the road. “No one journeys alone and no one should think they are alone”, he said., “According to church tradition we all have an ‘angel’ who guards us, because God told us, ‘I will send an angel before you to guard you, to accompany you on the way so that you will not make a mistake.’” The Pope went on, “How is my relationship with my guardian angel? Do I listen to him? Do I bid him good day in the morning? Do I ask his advice? Is he beside me?” Even Jesus had an ‘angel’ to look after him. When he was tempted in the desert by the devil, St. Matthew tells us, that ‘the devil left him and angels appeared and looked after him.’ (4:11). And Peter had a wonderful experience when he was in prison: “On the night before Herod was to try him, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, fastened with double chains, while the guards kept watch at the main entrance to the prison. Then suddenly the angel of the Lord stood there and the cell was filled with light. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him. ‘Get up,’ he said, and ‘hurry’, and the chains fell from his hands. The angel then said: ‘put on your belt and sandals.’ After he had done this the angel next said, ‘wrap your cloak round you and follow me.’ Peter followed him but had no idea that what the angel said was actually happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. They passed through two guard posts, one after the other, and reached the iron gate leading to the city. This opened of its own accord. They went through it and had walked the length of one street when suddenly the angel left him. It was only then that Peter came to himself: ‘Now I know it is all true,’ he said, ‘the Lord really did send his angel and has saved me from Herod and from all that the Jewish people were so certain would happen to me.’” (Acts 12:11-17)

Our guardian angels help us by:

- putting good thoughts into our minds
- offer our prayers and good works to God
- protect us from danger
- reveal God’s will to us – look at Joseph’s dream

Some of the angels have ‘names’ - eg. ‘Michael’, which means ‘who is like God’, ‘Gabriel’, which means ‘the strength of God’, or ‘Raphael’, which means ‘the healing of God’. But their names come only from what God is asking them to do and what he asks them to do is to be our ‘messengers’ and to protect us from harm.

What does it mean for us to be ‘angels’? Often you hear someone talk about another person as: ‘he’s an angel’. What does this mean? It can mean that this person is so good and kind that it is as if they have been sent by God to a friend at just the right moment to help and support them. Can we think of any examples where this might have happened?

Session 5 The Easter Message

Show DVD of “The First Witnesses”, a short play about the first people to see Jesus risen

The ‘Easter Message’ is quite simple: “Jesus is alive”. He was crucified, died and was buried in a tomb and now he is risen from the dead. Let us look at some of the stories about how his friends found out – who told them, what was their reaction and what did they do afterwards.

Mt.28:1-8: “After the Sabbath and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning; his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke, and he said to the women: “there is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen as he said he would. Come and see the place where he lay, and then go quickly and tell his disciples: he is risen from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him.” Filled with awe and great joy, the women came quickly from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples.

A similar account is found in Mk.16:2-8 and Lk.24:1-8

Mary of Magdala is shown as finding the tomb empty and then telling Peter, who goes to see for himself in Jn.20:1-10. Then Jesus appears to Magdalen in Jn.20:11-18

He appears to his disciples in Mt.28:16-20 and Lk.24:36-43. In Jn.20:19-29, Thomas is not with them and refuses to believe until Jesus comes again eight days later and shows Thomas his hands and side.

He appears to the two followers on the road to Emmaus in Lk.24:13-35 –and they ‘recognised him in the breaking of bread.’

In some stories about Jesus’ resurrection, its message is relayed by ‘angels’ at the tomb. Here is a specially written play about those events:

“The Best Jobs” – a short play about angels

Trevor, an angel, enters. He is dressed in white with large wings, which he removes, as if they were a backpack. He turns and is addressed by Angela, another angel

Angela Hi, Trev!

Trevor Hi Ange! Ah, these old wings are getting a bit tired and frayed round the edges – a bit like myself these days

Angela Give them to me and I’ll fix them up for you; they’ll be as good as new tomorrow

Trevor Thanks, Ange, that’s very nice of you

Angela Good day?

Trevor Hell of a day! I suppose I shouldn’t be saying that up here, but my Bertie’s being a little devil just lately. Who ever heard of a delinquent six year old? I’ve spent most of the day trying to keep him from running out into the road. He seems to think it’s some sort of game, but if I’d not been there, he’d have been toast, several times. How’s yours?

Angela Kelly? She's a teenager, so what do you expect? Time was, she'd be saying her prayers every night and asking us to look after her, but not now. No, she's got attitude. No guardian angel prayers for us any more. She doesn't even believe we exist and turned away from the boss as well. I still keep an eye on her, though, you know, just in case

Trevor Yeah, just in case. You know, Ange, I'm really fed up of all this. Flying around the place every day trying to protect ungrateful kids and missing out on all the best jobs. I keep getting passed over when the best jobs come along

Angela Don't worry, Trevor; I'm sure your day will come

Trevor Yeah, that's what Michael keeps saying. He told me to get fit, so I have to go to the gym every day after work and do all these silly exercises

He practises gymnastic exercises

Another thirty years, he said, and you'll have the biggest job of all, but, you know what, I don't believe him, if past experience is anything to go by. I got passed over for that passover job – flying round Egypt wreaking havoc and destruction and then parting the red sea. What a trick that was! I'd have loved that Ange, think of it – one wave of the arm and the waters just parted. Nice one! But not for me. Then there was the job on Zecharaiah –you should have seen his face. He's old and the message was, 'your wife's going to have a son called John'. He says, 'what? You're winding me up,' so then he got struck dumb as a punishment until the lad was born. Elizabeth didn't know what to make of it but she was so grateful. Then the Mary job – brilliant. I got down to the last three for that and thought I had a good chance, but Michael did his theatrical bit – “and the angel chosen for the Mary job is....” And I thought, Trevor, say Trevor, go on, give me a chance! But no....Gabriel got it. Michael's been watching too much of the wrong TV, if you ask me. She was great, you know, Mary – well, she was a bit puzzled, not being married and that, but all the same she agreed to the job straight away. Some woman, that. Then, to make matters worse, he sent Gabriel to Joseph as well, to tell him that he would have to look after the boss even though he wasn't his real Dad. Great bloke, Joe, trusting, you know. He took it really well if you ask me. He was going to have a quiet separation until Gabe went down to tell him where the boy was coming from, then he just agreed as well. Top people those two, top people, and I wasn't allowed to get near them. And then, to make matters even worse, I get sacked from the heavenly choir. 'The choirmaster doesn't like your 'alleluias', I was told. Some choirmaster he is. Whoever heard of an angel called 'Gareth'? Just because he taught a few soldiers' wives to sing and some yahoos from a housing estate in Basildon, he thinks he's up for the choir

of angels. Sacked me, just like that he did, in front of all the others. It was so humiliating.

Angela Never mind, Trevor; it's not the end of the world

Trevor My 'alleluias', Ange, are as good as anybody's, and the rate I'm going, even if it was the end of the world, you can bet your bottom dollar that I wouldn't be the one chosen to announce it.

He carries on with his gymnastic tasks

We're messengers, Ange, not glorified baby-sitters. Our very being is to give people messages from the boss, and if we can't do that, what's the point? That was a great job in Bethlehem, you know, with the choir. Those poor shepherds. Didn't know what hit them. Probably thought it was the cold, or the drink or something like that. You should have seen their faces – I've never seen fear like it. "Today, a Saviour has been born for you; he is Christ the Lord". Brilliant; frit the living daylights out of them, only I wasn't the one to have the pleasure and pride of doing it. They left me at home, because my 'alleluias weren't good enough'.

Angela But he promised you the big job, didn't he?

Trevor Yes, but all the big jobs have gone. How could there be any more? And he said it would take thirty years

Angela Well, Trev, thirty years is like a week up here, so you keep going and hold your breath. Someday soon, you're in a for huge surprise

Trevor Trouble is Ange, I've sort of given up hope, you know, of anything really special happening to me. It's the hierarchy, that's what it is –not supposed to be hierarchies up here; we're all supposed to be the same, but there is –angels, like you and me and then arch-angels, like them, swanning around, looking important and the making life difficult for the rest of us.

Angela Don't give up hope, Trevor; your day will come and soon, you see

Trevor Do you know something I don't?

Angela How could I? (*she smiles*). Here, I'll take your wings for you and fix them up so that they're ready for the big day (*She exits*)

Trevor Big day, eh? There'll never be a big day for me now; all my chances are gone

Voice is heard off stage

Michael Trevor, Trevor, are you there? Are you there, Trevor?

Trevor Yes, I'm here. I'd better do some of these exercises so he thinks I'm still trying to get fit.

He begins his exercises as Michael enters

Michael Ah, there you are. Glad to see you're getting fit. You're going to need to be soon.

Trevor Oh yes, Michael; I'm really fit now and raring to go

Michael Good. Now, Trevor, I've got this really big job for you to do and really important message to give. It's the most important message of all and I want you to tell it to everyone. Do you think you're up for it?

Trevor *(under his breath)* Yess! Oh, yes, Michael, I'm definitely up for it. You just say the word and I'm your angel. I won't let you down.

Michael Well, it's rather difficult and highly confidential for the moment, so listen carefully *(he whispers in Trevor's ear)*

Trevor You want me to do what?

Michael You heard me, didn't you?

Trevor Yes, I heard you all right. So that's why you were getting me to do all those exercises, so that I could you know...?

Michael Exactly

Trevor Then I have to wait until....?

Michael Exactly

Trevor And then give the message, yes?

Michael Perfect. I knew you were just the angel for a job like this. So the best of luck – not that you'll need it, I'm sure

Trevor No, Michael, you can depend on me for certain

Michael I thought so. Well, I'll see you then, afterwards...

Trevor Oh yes, certainly....afterwards

Michael exits

Yess! *(he shouts)* Angela, I need my wings now *(he exits)*

The scene changes to Easter Sunday morning. Trevor enters and notices a large stone.

Trevor Blimey! It's big. No wonder he wanted me to get fit...now if I can just budge it a little bit, I might be able to roll it away.

Business ensues when he tries to move the stone and eventually manages it before collapsing in a heap, exhausted. Eventually a figure emerges, covered in white cloths

Jesus Morning! Lovely day

Trevor Morning, er, sir! Yes it is

Jesus All right are we?

Trevor Yes, of course, you?

Jesus Couldn't be better. Look, thanks very much for rolling that stone away. Must have been quite a job

Trevor Oh no, sir, no trouble at all, no trouble at all

Jesus Well, thanks, anyway. Well, I'd better be off. Things to do, people to see, don't you know . I take it I can leave you to do the necessary here?

Trevor Yes, of course, sir; I'd be delighted

Jesus I always knew I could depend on you. Michael told me all about you and how loyal and eager you were.

Trevor Did he...really?

Jesus Oh yes...said you were by far the best angel for this job, and I'm sure you will be

Trevor Oh yes, sir, I'll do my very best and thank you, thank you so much

Jesus Well, I'll be off then and I'll see you, well soon, I hope

Trevor Yes sir, very soon, I hope so too

Jesus exits and Trevor sits on the stone. Music. Three women enter

Narrator A reading from St.Mark's gospel. Very early in the morning on the first day of the week the women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. They had been saying to one another "who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" But when they looked they could see that the stone, which was very big had already been rolled back. On entering the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in white seated on the right hand side, and they were struck with amazement, but he said to them:

Trevor Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here. See here is the place where they laid him. But you must go and tell his disciples that he is going before you to Galilee; you will see him there just as he told you.

Narrator Filled with awe and great joy, the women ran quickly away from the tomb and went to tell the disciples

The women exit, leaving Trevor alone

Trevor Yess!.....Ange, they saved the best job for me after all

END

Liturgy 1 – Our Lady of Lourdes, Mickleover, May 17 2015

This will incorporate work from Sessions 1-4

Hymn I heard the Lord call my name

Introduction *Derby Group*

Reader 1 Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Mickleover – well, actually you should have been made to feel very welcome already!

Reader 2 This year we have been thinking about what Pope Francis tells us we should be – messengers of joy

Reader 1 We have already had some lovely times together working out what that means

Reader 2 We have looked at messages – what are they for? Who sends them to whom? How are they sent?

Reader 1 Then we have thought about the messengers - who are they? Who sends them and why?

Scunthorpe group

Reader 3 What sort of messages and messengers can you think of?

Each of these is mimed

Postmen *A man enters with letters and 'posts' them*

Newspapers *Someone reads a paper*

Newsreaders on TV *Person sitting in a chair*

Newsreader Good evening and here is the news. Scunthorpe United won; Derby County didn't

Reader 4 Then there's twits

Reader 3 Twits?

People enter engrossed in phones, I-pads etc.

Reader 4 Yeah. People on twitter, facebook, bloggers and all those

Reader 3 Oh, I see

Reader 4 Then there's gossip

Two people mime gossiping

Naughty!

They react

You know what the pope says about gossips – not his favourite people!

Reader 3 Then there's sign language. Our friend Barbara has been 'signing' for deaf people for so many years and working to help them that this week she's going to Buckingham Palace to get the MBE. Isn't that great?

Barbara takes a modest bow

Reader 4 Then there's Makaton – signing with symbols. Many of us use it to give messages to each other and Jo is going to lead us in the Our Father later, using it.

Nottingham group - these are all acted out

Reader 5 And there are so many other ways - Talking, shouting, sending a letter ('snail mail'!) text message, phone, video chat, singing a song, flags, hand signals, morse code, a book (THE Book), jungle drums, semaphore, secret code, email, mime, i-message, paper plane, message in a bottle, lights signals, smoke signals or of course through actions.

Reader 6 You often see messages on what are called billboards – large notice boards in the street – or outside churches

Reader 5 Here are some we found in America

The group hold up cards with each message printed on them

Reader 6 "Best sausage supper in St.Louis. Come and eat Pastor Thomas Ressler"

- Reader 5 “Do you know what hell is? Come and hear our preacher”
- Reader 6 “What is missing from Church? UR”
- Reader 5 “Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves”
- Reader 6 There are some questions that cannot be answered by Google
- Reader 5 Church parking - trespassers will be baptised
- Reader 6 Every day above ground is a good one
- Reader 5 Repent now and avoid the rush on doomsday
- Reader 6 Down in the mouth? Time for a faith lift!

Hinckley group

- Reader 7 Then there is body language – we can communicate something to others just in the way we sit, stand, shake hands (limply or strongly) kiss / embrace, turn away or towards each other, smile or frown.
- Reader 8 See if you can guess what these people are trying to tell us by their body language

Act out people showing signs of nerves, being bored, sad, happy, falling out, making up, using their hands to make gestures, eg. waving, clapping, making a fist etc.

Loughborough Group

- Reader 9 Pope Francis has told us what the most important message we can receive is: Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you
- Reader 10 Today at Mass we will be thinking about two types of messengers from God – prophets and angels
- Reader 9 Six hundred years before Jesus was born, God chose some very special people called prophets to speak his message to his people: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, Amos and many more
- Reader 10 The word ‘prophet’ means to speak on behalf of someone else. Some of them got into real ‘scrapes’ because of the message God asked them to speak

But first we tell God we are all very sorry for the times we have not listened to his messages to us and done what he asked of us. O my God because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and with your help I will not sin again

Prayer

Dear Father, we come together at Mass to hear your voice, your message and to receive your life in Jesus your Son. Help us to listen to what you are trying to say to us and to do what you ask of us every day. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

First Reading *Hinckley group*

Narrator 1 The reading we are about to hear is from the prophet Amos. We don't know too much about Amos, except that he was a farmer and lived about 760 years before Our Lord was born. At that time, the kingdom of Israel was in fact two kingdoms - the north and the south. The north was very rich and the south was very poor. The people of the north were so engrossed in their luxury, in getting on, in 'keeping up with the Joneses' as we might call it, that nobody really bothered about what was happening outside, or about God who loved them - they just forgot him, and prayed when they felt like it.

Enter people swanning around and lying about, eating and drinking

Narrator 2 They were so preoccupied with themselves, what they wanted to have, what they wanted to do, that they completely forgot about God and his love for them. They spent their time enjoying themselves, eating big meals, making lots of money, and taking advantage of other people so that they could make more for themselves.

Show people taking from others and shooing them away

Narrator 1 God was angry with them, and sent a man called Amos to warn them. He was not a special holy man, but a shepherd from down south, a bit rough and ready, but not afraid to do what God had asked him. Amos was a southerner and God got hold of him and told him to go up north and warn the king and the people that they better watch out - if they kept ignoring God, something terrible might happen to them. So Amos went and spoke to Amaziah, the temple priest. Needless to say, Amaziah and friends took not one bit of notice.

Reading from Session 4 pp.9-10

Narrator 1 What sort of 'message' was Amos trying to give them and why? How did they take it? It is clear that he and the other prophets were often called on to speak 'on behalf of' God words of warning (and sometimes words of comfort) to particular people at a particular time. The word 'prophet' means to 'speak on behalf of', although sometimes we think of it as referring to someone who can predict the future. In all these cases, the prophets were called by God to speak

a message from him to his people – they were the first ‘messengers’ of the bible. What Amos ‘foresaw’ actually happened a hundred years later.

Psalm *Loughborough Group*

The response is: O Lord open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise

Be merciful to me O God,
blot out all the wrong I have done;
I trust your love and kindness;
I thank you for all your goodness to me

I know the wrong I have done,
I can't forget it.
I am sorry for the things I have done,
for the hurt I have caused you and others

You have searched the depth of my being;
you know what is deep within me;
give me again a pure heart
and a steadfast spirit to sustain me

Let me know the joy of being rescued by you;
of having you with me always;
May I tell of your goodness to me,
and speak your praise for ever

Gospel *Derby Group*

Narrator 1 What about “angels” – who are they and what do they do? We find many references to ‘angels’ in the Bible, and the word literally means, ‘messenger’ or ‘news giver’. Angels are spirits who live with God and are sent by him in bodily form to particular people and a particular time for a particular purpose. The name they are given is often something to do with the message they are sent to give. They are the creatures who are most like God and show forth his goodness, majesty and glory. They reflect his love, his beauty, his holiness and his power, and were created for his service and glory. Sometimes their function is to give a message and here are some examples of this from the gospels.

Reading from Session 4 pp.11-12

Bidding Prayers *Leicester group*

Priest Dear Father, please listen to us as we want to listen to you

Reader We pray that we may all learn how to listen to you and each other, so that we may know what you want to say to us. Lord hear us

- Reader Help us to be joyful people, not mean, miserable or moody, so that other people will be drawn to you through our happiness at being your friends. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for those people who do not listen to anyone, especially those who are trying to get them to change their minds for the sake of what is right. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for peace in our world, for an end to all the killing of innocent people that has been going on everywhere. Our message to them is: stop and stop now. Lord hear us
- Reader We thank you for our groups and clubs, for all the friends we have met, for all the work we have done and for all the happiness we have shared. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for all our friends who have died and in particular today for Yvonne Livingston of the Sunshine Club, Derek Reddington, a wonderful friend to the Loreto Club and communities, and three loving parents, Margaret Moore and Frank Joyce from Nottingham and Suzanne Burdett from Loughborough. Give them peace and light with you for ever. Lord hear us
- Reader Now we ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary
- Priest In praying the prayer of the servant church we ask God particularly to help us to speak with the words of Jesus to everyone, so that his message will be heard everywhere:

Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the heart of Christ and live with the life of Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever.

Offertory Hymn

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

Prayer over the gifts

- Priest Dear Father, we bring you this bread; we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves. Help us always to make our lives an offering of praise and thanks to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

Priest God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you through Jesus Christ who is our Lord. From the very beginning of time you spoke a message to your people in the things that you did for them, but so often they did not listen or take any notice of you. Then you sent them Jesus your Son, who is your last Word to us. Jesus came to speak your Word but also to be your Word, to show us how to live in your way every day. And so we thank you with all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy

Communion Hymn O the word of my Lord

Prayer after Communion

Priest Dear Father, we thank you for all you have been to us, all that you are to us and all that you will be, in Jesus Christ our Lord

Blessing

Final Hymn All over the world

Session 6 Messengers in the Bible – apostles and friends

Last time, we spoke about the ‘Easter Message’ – ‘Jesus is alive’ – and what a wonderful message that is. It means that everything he said and did is true and can be believed by all of us even today.

So who told this ‘Easter message’ to others? How did anyone else come to find out about it?

First of all it was the women, who went to the tomb, and in particular, Mary Magdalen, This is what we saw in ‘The First Witnesses’. Then they told the disciples and then Jesus appeared to his friends. Remember what happened when they told the news to Thomas, who was not with them that first Easter evening. He had to see for himself before he could believe them and then was ashamed when Jesus appeared again.

Today we’re going to think about Jesus’ first friends – what happened to them when they were called and after Pentecost – look at stories from Acts – they spoke with such conviction about Jesus that all who were suffering came to them. We hear the message of Jesus’ friends in the book called the Acts of the Apostles and also in the letters they wrote to the churches they had set up in places like Antioch, Ephesus, Rome.

“This is the message we have heard from him and the message we are announcing to you: God is light; there is no darkness in him at all.” (1st letter of St. John)

Prepare placards with the words: Jesus is Lord; God is light; Repent; Glory to God

Act out the scene from the ‘Dance of the Light’ or show it on a DVD.

Jesus mounts the podium with the disciples and stands on the stool

0.35 My little children, I shall not be with you much longer; I will send you a helper, the Spirit, to be with you for ever **26**

0.56 While they looked on he was taken from them and disappeared from their sight

Jesus exits at the back when the lights goes out, and the disciples exit SL & SR . He picks up a large red flag. They pick up red streamers and prepare to re-enter

1.26 When Pentecost day came round, they gathered in the one room

They enter, SL & SR, mount the podium, forming a group facing inwards

2.00 Suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven

They react in time with the music

2.15 They were all filled with the Holy Spirit

Jesus enters with the flag and runs around the group of disciples, who immediately react

2.58 *They begin to turn away from the circle and unfurl their streamers*

3.30 *The crowd enters in groups and place themselves at the periphery, facing inwards with streamers furled up. Jesus exits*

4.08 *The disciples break off from their groups and run around each group in the crowd waving their streamers, Each group reacts in turn, unfurls their streamers, and begins to dance increasingly vigorously.*

5.04 *All groups begin to turn outwards in swaying movement*

5.22 *Fast movement with everyone involved*

5.56 *Music ends suddenly,*

Now let's look at this story again from the Acts of the Apostles – cf. Acts 2:1-13. What happened to the apostles when they received the Spirit? They could speak every sort of language 'about the marvels of God'

Immediately Peter gives this message to the crowd – Acts 2:22-36, which ends, saying that we can be certain that 'God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' The incredible result of this message was that 'that day about three thousand were added to their number'.

Some of the apostles' message was given without words – in the way the early Christians lived – cf. Acts 4:32-35 – and also in the things they did, eg. the cure of a lame man in Acts 3:1-10. Peter then gave them this message: 'you must repent and turn to God'. The Jewish council did not believe that Peter and John could cure a lame man and so arrested them and

questioned them – Acts 4:1-22. They were arrested again, Acts 5:17-33, and gave another message, ‘obedience to God comes before obedience to men’.

Then we have the story of Stephen, the first martyr of the Church, Acts 6:8-7:60

Let’s look again at the story of Paul that we used last year – one of the greatest messengers of the Bible and what happened to him:

Paul comes up the aisle, looking strained.

Reader 1 Paul wasn't always called Paul, in fact his name was Saul. He was a very devout Jew, very holy and strict - probably a bit boring, well, you know how it is with people like that - too much religion and not enough love.

Reader 2 Saul was very serious, and completely over the top. He believed that there was only one God, and that he was the God of the Jewish people, as he had always promised. There could be no other God and no other religion, and that was that.

Reader 1 Then he heard about the Christians - a new group of people who claimed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and the one that God had always promised to his people.

Groups of people approach with their hands joined in prayer.

Reader 2 Well, Saul didn't like that, not one bit. He was very angry, and spent his time going round trying to find Christians and have them thrown into prison or even killed.

Saul goes round dragging people out.

Saul Here, here's one, and here another, and another - take them away and lock them up.

Reader 1 Saul was vicious; he could not abide the thought that he had been wrong all his life, and that he had not realized that this Jesus really was the Son of God. When he heard that there were a lot of Christians hiding in Damascus, he set out to go there, to find them and imprison them.

Saul goes round looking threatening then all of a sudden, stops short.

Reader 2 Suddenly, while he was travelling to Damascus there came a great light from heaven all round him. He fell to the ground, and then he heard a voice saying,

Saul falls to the ground

Jesus Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

- Saul Who are you, Lord?
- Jesus I am Jesus and you are persecuting me. Get up now and go into the city where you will be told what to do.
- Reader 1 Saul got up from the ground and he was blind, so he had to be led by the hand into the city, where he ate nothing for three days. A disciple called Ananaias, who lived in Damascus, had a vision in which he heard the Lord say to him, ‘Ananaias, you must go to Straight Street and ask at the house of Judas for someone called Saul, who comes from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying, having had a vision of a man called Ananaias coming in and laying hands on him to give him back his sight.’
- Reader 2 When he heard that, Ananaias said,
- Ananaias Lord, several people have told me about this man and all the harm he has been doing to your saints in Jerusalem. He has only come here to arrest any more people who follow you.
- Reader 1 The Lord replied, ‘you must go all the same, because I have chosen this man to preach my name to people all over the world, Jewish and pagan.’
- Reader 2 So Ananaias went, found the house and went in. At once he laid his hands on Saul and said,
- Ananaias Brother Saul, I have been sent by the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on your way here so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’
- Reader 1 Immediately Saul could see again, so he was baptised there and then and took some food to regain his strength. So Saul realized that Jesus really was the one he had been looking for. God changed his name to Paul, and not only that, God changed his whole personality. Paul then set out to tell everyone everywhere about Jesus and went all over the world doing so
- Reader 2 After he had spent only a few days with the disciples in Damascus, he began
- Saul Jesus is the Son of God

As we go through the book of Acts, there are countless examples of the apostles giving ‘messages’ about God and Jesus to people all over the place. Paul travelled to lots of places far away because he was so convinced that Jesus is Lord, and then the letters came afterwards to encourage the people he had preached too. Other apostles like Peter, John and James wrote letters as well. Here is another example from the first letter of St. John:

1 Jn.3:1-2, 4:9-12 “Think of the love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God’s children and that is what we are...my dear people we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is that when it is

revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is... God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son, so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean, not our love for God but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away. My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God, but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us..."

There was a purpose to the message: 'what we have seen and heard we are telling you so that you too may be in union with us...

Before Session 7 – Nottingham Group tribute to Gill Thomas; Hinckley Group tribute to Zoe Baker; Derby Group tribute to Elizabeth McCord

Liturgy 2 – St. Bernadette's, Scunthorpe, Sunday June 28 2015

This will incorporate work from Sessions 5 and 6.

Entry Hymn *Give me joy in my heart*

Introduction *Scunthorpe Group*

Reader 1 Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Scunthorpe

Reader 2 Thank you all so much for making the effort to be here with us

Reader 3 This year we have been thinking about what Pope Francis tells us we should be – messengers of joy

Reader 4 We have already had some lovely times together working out what that means

Reader 1 We have looked at messages – what are they for? Who sends them to whom? How are they sent?

Reader 2 Then we have thought about the messengers - who are they? Who sends them and why?

Reader 3 At Mickleover, we thought about how God sends his messages to his people

Reader 4 Some were sent through prophets like Amos – remember him?

Martin Hussey says: 'Stop'

Reader 1 And some were sent through angels, like Gabriel

Reader 2 Today we are thinking about the Easter message – Jesus is alive

Reader 3 What a wonderful thing that is

Reader 4 Who gave it, to whom and what happened afterwards? **30**

Reader 1 And then, what happened when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on his frightened disciples

Reader 2 All of a sudden they were not frightened any more

Reader 3 They were full of fire and courage

Reader 4 They ran out into the streets and shouted: Jesus is Lord

Reader 1 They could even speak many different languages so that all the people living in Jerusalem could hear and understand

Reader 2 Later on, they would write that message time and time again in the letters they sent to the churches they had established, like this one from St.John:

Reader 3 This is the message we have heard from him and the message we are announcing to you:

Reader 4 God is light; there is no darkness in him at all.

Loughborough Group

Reader 1 Jesus speaks that message of life and love and joy to us today

Reader 2 It has come to us through the centuries of the Church

Reader 3 It comes to us through the holy gospel

Reader 4 Not only that, he is calling all of us to bring it to each other

Reader 1 Pope Francis tells us: preach the gospel and if necessary, use words

Reader 2 But sometimes we do not want to hear that message

Reader 3 Because it might mean we have to change how we see and do things

Reader 4 And sometimes we certainly do not want to give it or share it with others

Reader 1 And so we tell Jesus we are sorry for hurting him

Reader 2 Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Good News from God, Lord have mercy

Reader 3 Lord Jesus Christ, you are the real joy of our lives. Christ have mercy

Reader 4 Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us when we do not want to hear you or tell others about you. Lord have mercy

Prayer Dear Father, we come together at Mass to hear your voice, your message and to receive your life in Jesus your Son. Help us to listen to what you are trying

to say to us and to do what you ask of us every day. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

For today's liturgy, the gospel will come before the first reading

Gospel *Derby group*

Narrator For the purposes of understanding this short gospel play, we need to imagine that Fr.Frank is an angel..... yes, I know that is a bit difficult, but nevertheless..... Fr.Frank is an angel, called Trevor, and he comes back home to heaven after a hard day's work guarding people and talks to his friend, Angela

Reading from Session 5 pp.14-19

Trevor, an angel, enters. He is dressed in white with large wings, which he removes, as if they were a backpack. He turns and is addressed by Angela, another angel

Psalm God's Spirit is in my heart

Reading Acts of the Apostles – *Nottingham, Leicester and Hinckley groups*

The 'Pentecost dance' from the 'Dance of the Light' is acted out with everyone taking part

Reading from Session 6 pp.25-26

Homily *Derby group*

Reader 1 Wasn't that wonderful? I bet it brought back so many memories for us

Reader 2 Do you remember that brilliant day in Derby 15 years ago when we all gathered in the Assembly Rooms for the 'Dance of the Light'?

Reader 3 And over 800 people came to hear our message of joy. They stood up and clapped on their feet for a full ten minutes at the end

Reader 1 It was so special and still is every time we see it

Reader 2 The Easter message is that Jesus is not dead but alive

Reader 3 And therefore all he ever said is true, and is still true for all of us today

Reader 1 We shall shortly be thinking then about what Jesus' message to us actually is?

Reader 2 How did he say it and what did he mean?

Reader 3 And when we gather for our special celebration in Loughborough next month, that is what we will be thinking about – the message of Jesus for yesterday, today and for all time

- Priest Dear Father, please listen to us as we want to listen to you
- Reader We pray that we may all learn how to listen to you and each other, so that we may know what you want to say to us. Lord hear us
- Reader Help us to be joyful people, not mean, miserable or moody, so that other people will be drawn to you through our happiness at being your friends. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for those people who do not listen to anyone, especially those who are trying to get them to change their minds for the sake of what is right. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for peace in our world, for an end to all the killing of innocent people that has been going on everywhere. Our message to them is: stop and stop now. Lord hear us
- Reader We thank you for our groups and clubs, for all the friends we have met, for all the work we have done and for all the happiness we have shared. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for Father Patrick McKinney, who will become our new bishop this week. We look forward to meeting him in Hinckley, and we pray that he will be strong, loving and cheerful as our shepherd. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for our dear friend, Gill Thomas, for many years a member of our Loreto Club, who sadly died at the beginning of the month in Cornwall. We pray for Dave, her husband and for all her family, that you will bless and comfort them at this time. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for Zoe Baker, who often came to our Sunshine Club in Hinckley, who died two weeks ago. We pray for her family and her friends at the Briars who will miss her so much. We pray also for Elizabeth McCord, Mervyn's Mum from Derby, who died last week after a long illness. Lord hear us
- Reader Now we ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary
- Priest In praying the prayer of the servant church we ask God particularly to help us to speak with the words of Jesus to everyone, so that his message will be heard everywhere:

Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the

heart of Christ and live with the life of Christ, who is Lord for ever
and ever.

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Offertory Hymn All that I am

Prayer over the gifts

Priest Dear Father, we bring you this bread; we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves. Help us always to make our lives an offering of praise and thanks to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

Preface

Priest God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you through Jesus Christ who is our Lord. From the very beginning of time you spoke a message to your people in the things that you did for them, but so often they did not listen or take any notice of you. Then you sent them Jesus your Son, who is your last Word to us. Jesus came to speak your Word but also to be your Word, to show us how to live in your way every day. And so we thank you with all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy

Eucharistic Prayer No.2

Communion Music Bread of Life

Communion Hymn I the Lord of sea and sky

Blessing

Final Hymn I give my hands

Session 7 *The Message of Jesus*

We have thought about the ‘messengers’ in the bible like prophets and angels; we have considered Jesus’ first friends and the message they gave to others: Jesus is your promised messiah, Jesus is alive, Jesus is the Son of God, but what about the message of Jesus himself? What does he say? What does he want to tell his followers and all of us? How did he do it? Most of Jesus’ message is brought to us by those who told the stories about him, the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. What does ‘evangelist’ mean? - ‘good news teller’

The most important message that Jesus gave his friends is: “Love one another as I have loved you” – in other words we must love God and each other in the same way that Jesus loved and loves us. What does this mean? Have some discussion on the way Jesus loved people – eg. people he healed, his friends Martha and Mary, the people he spent time with that no one else liked, eg. Mary Magdalene and the ‘tax collectors and sinners’. In conclusion, we come to this: **Mk.8:35-6** “If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it but anyone

who loses his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel, will save it..." So Jesus' message is: say 'no' to yourself and 'yes' to God and each other.

The most beautiful example of the message of Jesus is in what we call the 'Beatitudes'

This may be mimed to "Nimrod" from Elgar's "Enigma Variations"

- 0.10 Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill (*Jesus walks up the aisle, followed by the disciples who arrange themselves in three groups on the sanctuary*). There he was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak; this is what he taught them.
- 0.40 How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (*a group together with their heads down; Jesus points upwards and they lift up their heads*).
- 1.15 Happy the gentle; they shall have the earth for their heritage. (*A group with their arms around each other. Jesus points to them and makes a sweeping gesture outwards*).
- 1.45 Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right; they shall be satisfied (*Group with hands outstretched in supplication; Jesus puts something into each of their hands*).
- 2.00 Happy the merciful; they shall have mercy shown them (*figures kneeling to each other; Jesus lifts them up*).
- 2.20 Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God (*A group with their hands across their hearts; Jesus points to heaven*).
- 2.40 Happy the peacemakers; they shall be called sons of God (*People standing back to back; Jesus turns them to face each other and puts their hands in each others's*).
- 3.10 Happy those who mourn; they shall be comforted (*Group with hands over their faces; Jesus consoles them*).
- 3.30 Happy are you when people abuse you, and persecute you, and speak all kinds of wickedness against you; rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. (*Everyone groups together and holds hands; Jesus stands in the middle and slowly raises his hands to heaven. Everyone else follows suit*).
- 4.0 This is the gospel of the Lord

Discussion: Let us think what it means to:

Be gentle	Be humble	Be sorrowful	Be merciful
Be just	Be peaceful	Be pure	Be brave

We will make a note of our responses and use them at the Loughborough Mass. 35

Do you remember what we did last year at Mount St. Bernard Abbey when we thought about this message of Jesus?

Jesus When you want to be God's friends, don't show off so that others can see you

Group A enter showing off

So when you are giving money away, do not have it trumpeted before you

The group imitate trumpet players

This is what the hypocrites do in the churches and streets so that everyone will notice and be impressed

They mime giving money away and waving to everyone

I tell you, they have had their reward

The group stop and look shocked

No, when you give money away, your left hand must not know what your right hand is doing

Group B enter and slap their left hands with their right

Give your money away in secret

They put their fingers to their lips and say 'sssh!'

And your father, who sees all that is done in secret will reward you

They join their hands in prayer and look upwards

And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites

Group A all pray loudly and raucously – "can you hear me God? Here I am, yoo hoo, look at me, I'm praying" etc.

They love to say their prayers in church standing up where everyone can see them

They carry on waving and stretching out their hands

I tell you, they have had their reward

The group stop and look shocked

But when you pray, go to your private room and shut your door

Group B mime shutting their door and then praying

And then pray to your Father who is in that secret place

They put their fingers to their lips and say 'sssh!'

And your father, who sees all that is done in secret will reward you

They join their hands in prayer and look upwards

And when you fast do not look miserable like the hypocrites do

Group A look miserable

They pull long faces to let everyone know they are fasting

They moan and groan – "Look at me, I'm fasting; it's terrible" etc.

I tell you, they have had their reward

The group stop and look shocked

But when you fast put oil on your head and wash your face

Group B mime this

So that no one will know you are fasting, except your father, who sees all that is done in secret

They put their fingers to their lips and say 'sssh!'

And your father, who sees all that is done in secret will reward you

They join their hands in prayer and look upwards

And when you pray, do not babble as some people do

Group A 'babble'

They think that by using many words, they will make themselves heard

They make a show of speaking very quickly and asking for things (eg. 'give me money, make me rich, make me strong', etc.)

I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward.

The group stop and look shocked

Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him

Group B look upwards and smile. Then all the group gather together in a big circle and hold hands

This is how you should pray

All the group say or sing the 'Our Father'

What other messages did Jesus give his friends?

Forgive – even if you are not asked, and even if it hurts

Don't be angry, call each other names, swear or judge anyone

Don't look for revenge and love your enemies as well as your friends

Don't worry about..... tomorrow what you wear or look like

.....what you have or don't havewhat you eat

You are to be 'salt' to the earth – what is salt for and what does Jesus mean here

You are to be light to the world – what does that mean? 'Seeing your good works people will give praise to the Father in heaven'

Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect

The messages that come from Jesus are very clear but sometimes they are very hard and may cost us – are we willing to pay the price for him and each other?

Liturgy 3 - St.Mary's Church, Loughborough, on Sunday July 19 2015 - A Message of Surprise and Delight.

This will incorporate a certain reminiscence and work from Session 7

Entry Hymn I give my hands

Introduction *Loughborough Group*

Reader 1 Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Loughborough

Reader 2 We would especially like to welcome visitors who have come to join our SPANNED groups today for this very special occasion

Reader 3 Some of you have come a long way – from Ireland – and several from Birmingham, and other towns and cities. Some of you were here on a very special day 40 years ago and are here again today. We are delighted to have you with us

Reader 1 Exactly 40 years ago in this church, a large group of people from Birmingham and elsewhere came together to celebrate what was actually the first large gathering of people with disabilities and learning difficulties in the Nottingham Diocese.

Reader 2 It was two days after the ordination of Fr.Frank and they were all his friends

Reader 3 There were at that time, Lourdes reunions and Confirmation Masses for the CHCF, but neither of these involved participation in a specially designed liturgy.

Reader 1 The event proclaimed a message - we are here; we are together; we belong; we have gifts to share – and was such a surprise and delight to all those present.

This phrase will be simply mimed by the Derby group

Reader 2 Fr.Frank's Uncle Tommy, from Limerick was heard to say afterwards: "You'll all go to heaven"! This was what the joyful Mass had meant to him and so many others

Reader 3 And so, today, we have come to celebrate the 40th anniversary of that remarkable event where it actually took place, an event which laid the foundations of what was later to become SPANNED (whose official 40th birthday will be celebrated next March)

Reader 1 The message that was proclaimed that day is the same message we have proclaimed ever since

Reader 2 That is the message of Jesus – God loves you; he cares for you; he is with you always

Reader 3 It is a real message of joy, which Jesus asks us to tell everyone

Prayer God our Father on this very special day we are so glad to be together. We thank you for your love, for our friendship in SPANNED for nearly 40 years, and we ask you to help us to be your messengers of joy to everyone, today and always. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

Gospel (1) The Beatitudes *Hinckley and Leicester groups*

Reading from Session 7 p.34

Hymn Sing a simple song unto the Lord

Gospel (2) *Nottingham & Derby Groups*

Here is another example of the message Jesus is giving to his friends, from St. Matthew's gospel. Do you remember us showing it to the monks in Mount St. Bernard Abbey last summer?

Reading from Session 7 p.35-37

Homily *Hinckley group*

What other messages did Jesus give his friends? *This is mimed; some of the key words could be put on placards*

Come – to me to rest and gain your strength again

Forgive – even if you are not asked, and even if it hurts

Love – love, and love again, just as I have loved you

Forget – yourself and think of others first

Don't be **angry**, call each other names, swear or judge anyone

Don't look for **revenge** and love your enemies as well as your friends

Don't **worry** about..... tomorrow what you wear or look like

.....what you have or don't have what you eat

You are to be '**salt**' to the earth – to give it a special flavour of love and peace

You are to be **light** to the world – wherever there is darkness, we have to show the way so that.....'seeing your good works people will give praise to the Father in heaven'

Be **perfect** as your Father in heaven is perfect

Believe – in me and I will save you

Eat - my body for your food

Drink – my blood and live for ever

The messages that come from Jesus are very clear but sometimes they are very hard and may cost us – are we willing to pay the price for him and each other?

Bidding Prayers *Scunthorpe group*

Priest Dear Father, please listen to us as we want to listen to you

Reader We pray that we may all learn how to listen to you and each other, so that we may know what you want to say to us. Lord hear us

- Reader Help us to be joyful people, not mean, miserable or moody, so that other people will be drawn to you through our happiness at being your friends. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for those people who do not listen to anyone, especially those who are trying to get them to change their minds for the sake of what is right. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for peace in our world, for an end to all the killing of innocent people that has been going on everywhere. Our message to them is: stop and stop now. Lord hear us
- Reader We thank you for our groups and clubs, for all the friends we have met, for all the work we have done and for all the happiness we have shared. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for our new bishop, Patrick. We look forward to meeting him in Hinckley, and we pray that he will be strong, loving and cheerful as our shepherd. Lord hear us
- Reader We pray for our brothers Father Frank and Father Peter, who have been priests for 40 years this year. We thank you for your messages that you have given us through them and that they have shown us how to spread that message to others. Please bless them with health and strength in your service. Lord hear us
- Reader Now we ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary
- Priest In praying the prayer of the servant church we ask God particularly to help us to speak with the words of Jesus to everyone, so that his message will be heard everywhere:

Hinckley group to mime

Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the heart of Christ and live with the life of Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever.

Offertory *Loughborough Group*

- Reader Exactly 40 years ago when some of us gathered here in this very church, we sang this hymn which no one here had ever heard before

Prayer over the gifts

Fr.Frank Dear Father, we bring you this bread; we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves. Help us always to make our lives an offering of praise and thanks to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

Preface

Priest God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you through Jesus Christ who is our Lord. From the very beginning of time you spoke a message to your people in the things that you did for them, but so often they did not listen or take any notice of you. Then you sent them Jesus your Son, who is your last Word to us. Jesus came to speak your Word but also to be your Word, to show us how to live in your way every day. And so we thank you with all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy

Tribute to Fr.Pat Harte *Fr.Frank*

Eucharistic Prayer No.3

Our Father (*sung – echo*) Jesus said to his friends: this is how you pray

Communion Music In the Lord is my joy and salvation (*Margaret Rizza*)

Hymn I am the bread of life

Prayer Dear Father in heaven, thank you for this day and all that it means to us. Thank you for our life as your friends in SPANNED. Please help us to be messengers of your joy always. We ask this through Christ our Lord

Blessing

Fr.Frank 40 years ago, we ended the most wonderful Mass here in this church with this beautiful prayer: Peace my brothers (*sung*)

Final Hymn Moses I know you're the man

Session 8 *Sharing good news*

Welcome back after the summer. Has anyone done anything interesting since we last met, did you have any mishaps or has something funny happened to you? Please tell us.

Let's have a recap of what we have been doing this year:

“Messengers of Joy” – this is what Pope Francis calls all of us to be

What are messages and who gives them to whom?

How are messages given and by whom?

Messengers in the bible – prophets and angels – Amos and ‘Trevor’. What did God want to

say to them? Messages of the angels to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, women at the tomb

The Easter message: Jesus is alive – who gave it to whom?

Jesus first friends – how did they give their message and how did they receive it?

“Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation... Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you, yes, until the end of time.”

What is the message of Jesus himself? Look at the ‘Beatitudes’ again and below:

Text from Liturgy 3 p.39

So how do we tell people the message of Jesus and how can we be messengers of joy?

“Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and follow him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendour and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties.... We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings. including those unconventional modes of beauty which may mean little to the evangelizers, yet prove particularly attractive to others.” (Pope Francis)

Let’s think about sharing ‘Good news’ first? Has anyone got any really good news they want to share with us today? Real good news is something we can’t keep to ourselves – we have to share it; we are bursting with happiness and we have to tell somebody? Could we say this about the good news of Jesus and his message? Are we bursting with happiness to tell it to others? How do we do it?

Hymn – Go tell everyone.

Session 9 *How can we be messengers?*

“All of us are called to offer others a witness to the saving love of the Lord, who, despite our imperfections, offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope is what you also need to communicate to others.” Pope Francis

We are all called to be ‘messengers’ as the Pope reminds us:

“What the passages of the gospel make clear is the ‘absolute priority of going forth from ourselves towards our brothers and sisters...’”

“The main reason for telling someone else about Jesus is his love which we have received. What sort of love would there be that did not want to speak of the person who loves you, to point him out to others, to make him known?”

How can we bring the message to people? Eg. by not doing things they expect, being different – kind, thoughtful, giving our lives away. How might we actually do this ‘in our own place’ as Cardinal Newman says? “If necessary, use words” – what can we say through ‘body language’? Use some scenarios to depict different emotions without saying a word – eg. smiling, frowning, crying. Play a games of ‘charades’ and get two teams to compete – how do these signs communicate a message without words? Play the Pictionary game as well. What about ‘hugging’ – what does that say? Play CD of the song, ‘We say it best, when we say nothing at all’. Examine the beatitudes and call them be – attitudes.

Use the “Servant Church” prayer: think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ etc. and work out how each part of it might be done in practice

“Whom shall I send? Who will be my messenger?” – “Here I am, send me”- Is.6:1-6

“No I won’t; yes I will”

How many times have we said ‘no’ to people who asked us to do something? How did we feel about it afterwards? Cf. parable of the two sons and the vineyard. How do you feel when you are not getting your own way? (Act out a “it’s not fair scenario”) Nb. what happens when the Speaker of the House of Commons is elected and is ceremoniously ‘dragged’ to the chair. How do you feel when someone has said ‘no’ to you? Do you ever change your mind when you have refused someone? Cf. election of the Pope, Jesus’ agony in the garden. Pope Francis says: Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, nor place for the poor.”

Look at the liturgy for the Hinckley Mass to see how we can be Jesus’ messengers

Liturgy 4 – St.Peter’s, Hinckley, Saturday September 19 2015

Music *Lourdes Millennium Fanfare*

Hymn Give me joy in my heart

Greeting

Introduction *Simon Brittle*

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Hinckley for our Annual SPANNED Mass. Please sit down. A very special welcome to our new bishop, Patrick, who is with us for the first time. Dear bishop Patrick, you will make many new friends today and we hope that you will always think of us as your friends, just as Bishop Malcolm did. And so, we’d like to tell you a little about SPANNED and introduce you to your new friends. SPANNED, which stands for

Supporting People with Additional Needs in the Nottingham Diocese, is an agency which has been in existence for 40 years next year. You will be coming to celebrate that with us here on Saturday September 17 – we know that because it is already in your diary! We have six groups which meet regularly, so let me introduce them to you: Derby, Hinckley, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham and Scunthorpe. We also have a ministry to the deaf and hard of hearing and Sr. Bernadette, one of our trustees, looks after members of the travelling community. Each year we follow a project of work in our group sessions and bring the work together in four liturgies in different places. We see ourselves as not simply receivers of God's Word, but also its proclaimers to others in what we say and do. We will tell you a little about this year's work in a moment, but first we would like to make the beginning of your ministry as our bishop with a very special present.

The mitre is brought in procession and presented to Bishop Patrick. Everyone applauds

Hinckley and Leicester Groups

Reader 1 Bishop Patrick, this year we have been thinking about "Messengers of Joy", words spoken to us all by Pope Francis

Reader 2 What are messages and who gives them to whom? We defined a message as: 'a usually short communication, transmitted by words, signals or other means, from one person, or group to another

Reader 1 How are messages given and by whom?

This is mimed

Reader 2 Postmen, newspaper journalists, newsreaders on TV, subscribers to twitter, facebook, and people talking or writing to each other

Reader 1 Then there are other means of communication –gossip, Chinese whispers, sign language, adverts on TV.

Reader 2 There is also a language called Makaton, which many of us use to communicate and BSL which is used to give messages between deaf people – this is what Barbara is doing at the moment

Reader 2 Pope Francis has told us what the most important message we can receive is: Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you

Reader 1 So what about God? What are his messages and who tells them to us?

Reader 2 Six hundred years before Jesus was born, God chose some very special people called prophets to speak his message to his people: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, Amos and many more

Reader1 Remember Amos? We met him at Scunthorpe 45

Martin Stop!

Reader 2 Then there's angels – God's very special messengers

Reader 1 They speak at very important times to important people like Mary and Joseph, and the women at Jesus' tomb

Reader 2 We also met a special angel called 'Trevor' who ended up with the best job of all

They all point at Fr.Frank

Reader 1 That is giving the Easter message – Jesus is alive

Reader 2 Then what about Jesus first friends – how did they give their message and how did they receive it?

Reader 1 And what is the message of Jesus anyway? Jesus says:

This is mimed. Text from Liturgy 3 p.39

Reader 2 Today at Mass we are thinking about our calling to be messengers ourselves

Reader 1 Pope Francis tells us: "The main reason for telling someone else about Jesus is his love which we have received. What sort of love would there be that did not want to speak of the person who loves you, to point him out to others, to make him known?"

Reader 2 So how can we point him out to others? How can we make him known? And what prevents us from doing this?

Rite of Penance

Bishop Whenever our life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others – this is also the message of Pope Francis to us all. He means that if we think too much about ourselves, we cannot see Jesus and we cannot make him known to others. And so we tell Jesus that we are sorry for all the times we have not listened to his message to us and not wanted to share it with others:

Bishop Lord Jesus Christ you are our brother and our friend, Lord have mercy

All Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our healer and our Saviour, Christ have mercy

All Christ have mercy

All **Lord have mercy**

Bishop May Almighty God have mercy on us...

Prayer

Dear Father, we come together at Mass to hear your voice, your message and to receive your life in Jesus your Son. Help us to listen to what you are trying to say to us and to do what you ask of us every day as his messengers. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord

First Reading *Derby Group*

Let us listen to this beautiful reading from the prophet Isaiah. God called him when he was in the temple praying. He was so frightened because no one had ever seen God before. Yet God chose him to be his messenger, and touched his mouth with fire, and then he willingly agreed to what was asked of him.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah. In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord. He was seated on a high throne, surrounded by angels and his glory filled the whole temple, which was filled with smoke and which shook from its foundations. I said: "What a terrible man I am. I am lost, for I am a sinner and I live among sinners. My lips are unclean and yet I have looked on the Lord God." Then one of the angels flew over to me holding a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from on the altar. He touched my mouth with the fire and said: "see, this fire has touched your lips, your sin is taken away, your wickedness is cleansed." Then I heard the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send? Who will be my messenger?" I answered, "Here I am...send me"

Psalm I the Lord of sea and sky

Gospel *Loughborough Group*

Jesus took his special friends up a mountain and said to them: "go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News. Tell everyone about me and make new friends for me, showing them how to live as I told you to. And know this: I am with you always, yes even to the end of time."

Homily *Nottingham Group*

Reader 1 When God spoke to Isaiah and asked who will be my messenger, he replied: 'Here I am send me' – are we going to say the same when he asks us?

Reader 2 Jesus told his first friends to go out to the whole world and tell everyone the good news of his message – will we, his friends, want to do the same?

Reader 1 So how do we tell people the message of Jesus and how can we be messengers of joy?

- Reader 2 Pope Francis says: “Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and follow him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendour and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties....
- Reader 1 We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, to communicate the word, he says, so what can we say?
- Reader 2 First we can say that if the message of Jesus is really Good News to us, then it is something we simply cannot keep to ourselves – we have to share it with others
- Reader 1 The Pope tells us: “All of us are called to offer others a witness to the saving love of the Lord, who, even though we get things wrong, offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope is what you also need to communicate to others.”
- Reader 1 So how can we tell people? How can we tell them of this love we have received and want to share?
- Reader 2 Pope Francis often tells us the words of his namesake, St.Francis – “preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words”
- Reader 1 How can we speak without using words?
- Reader 2 One way is by not being the same as everyone else and by doing things differently from others:

This is mimed

- Reader 1 We can smile when others are miserable
- Reader 2 We can be thoughtful and kind, not selfish and proud
- Reader 1 We can be truthful when others lie
- Reader 2 We can share the joy of having Jesus as our friend with those who do not know him
- Reader 1 We can forgive others when they hurt us and not hold it against them
- Reader 2 We can give away what we have rather than keeping everything for ourselves
- Reader 1 We can eat less so that others have food
- Reader 2 We can be ourselves

Reader 1 Listen to this beautiful song of Ronan Keating and imagine that we are singing the words to Our Lord himself

Play CD of the song, 'We say it best, when we say nothing at all'. It is mimed

Bidding Prayers *Scunthorpe group*

Bishop Dear Father, please listen to us as we want to listen to you

Reader We pray that we may all learn how to listen to you and each other, so that we may know what you want to say to us. Lord hear us

Reader Help us to be joyful people, not mean, miserable or moody, so that other people will be drawn to you through our happiness at being your friends. Lord hear us

Reader We pray for those people who do not listen to anyone, especially those who are trying to get them to change their minds for the sake of what is right. Lord hear us

Reader We pray for peace in our world, for an end to all the killing of innocent people that has been going on everywhere. Our message to them is: stop and stop now. Lord hear us

Reader We thank you for our groups and clubs, for all the friends we have met, for all the work we have done and for all the happiness we have shared. Lord hear us

Reader We pray for our new bishop, Patrick, that he will be strong, loving and cheerful as our shepherd. Lord hear us

Reader We pray for our brothers Father Frank and Father Peter, who have been priests for 40 years this year. We thank you for your messages that you have given us through them and that they have shown us how to spread that message to others. Please bless them with health and strength in your service. Lord hear us

Reader We take a moment to remember all those dear friends from SPANNED who have died since we met for our Annual Mass last year:

Relatives bring up candles and place them in front of their photos on the table as the music "Jesus Remember Me" is played

Yvonne Livingston, Derek Reddington, Margaret Moore, Frank Joyce, Suzanne Burdett, Gill Thomas, Zoe Baker and Elizabeth McCord, Derek Mobbs and Francis O'Grady. May they live with you in peace for ever. Lord hear us

Reader Now we ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary

Bishop In praying the prayer of the servant church we ask God particularly to help us to speak with the words of Jesus to everyone, so that his message will be heard everywhere:

Scunthorpe group to mime

Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the heart of Christ and live with the life of Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever.

Offertory Hymn I give my hands

Prayer over the gifts

Bishop Dear Father, we bring you this bread; we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves. Help us always to make our lives an offering of praise and thanks to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

Preface

Bishop God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you through Jesus Christ who is our Lord. From the very beginning of time you spoke a message to your people in the things that you did for them, but so often they did not listen or take any notice of you. Then you sent them Jesus your Son, who is your last Word to us. Jesus came to speak your Word but also to be your Word, to show us how to live in your way every day. And so we thank you with all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy

Eucharistic Prayer No.3

Communion Music

Hymn This is what Yahweh asks of you

After Communion *Loughborough Group*

Reader 1 So who will help us to be messengers of joy

Reader 2 Who will show us what to say and do for him?

Reader 1 Who will guide us in the right way?

Reader 2 Who will help us when no one seems to want to listen to our message?

- Reader 1 It is the Holy Spirit of God himself, who came to Jesus' first friends at Pentecost
- Reader 2 To fill them with fire and enthusiasm, with courage and love
- Reader 1 So we are going to ask God's Holy Spirit to come on us today by retelling that beautiful story in the way we did 13 years ago in "The Dance of the Light"
- Reader 2 Bishop Patrick, in the next five minutes you will see exactly what SPANNED does and is for, and we hope that like us, it will make you rejoice

Reading Acts of the Apostles – *Nottingham, Leicester and Hinckley groups to lead*

The 'Pentecost dance' from the 'Dance of the Light' is acted out with everyone taking part

Text from Session 6 pp.25-26

Prayer Dear Father in heaven, thank you for this day and all that it means to us. Thank you for our life as your friends in SPANNED. Please help us to be messengers of your joy always. We ask this through Christ our Lord

Blessing

Final Hymn Go tell everyone

Session 10 *Messengers of joy*

"I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete" (Jn.15)
 What was Jesus telling them 'so that my own joy may be in you'? He told them this: 'love one another as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends'. Thus Jesus was telling them that 'joy' comes when you have loved others like he does, that is, completely, giving your whole self away. This is the heart of the gospel message and the key to our becoming 'messengers of joy' ourselves.

Am I a joyful person? what makes me happy / sad? (*make happy and sad faces out of card circles and mount them on sticks – we hold them in front of our faces as appropriate. Have a discussion about what makes us 'happy' and 'sad' and make a note of each response*).

Sunshine Club - are you a miserable person?

Shirley – I am a miserable person because I am unable to appreciate and understand others and am usually in a bad mood (she isn't!)

Stuart's acting roles – "MOSSO" – 'miserable old so-and-so'; "Scrooge" – he was miserable because he didn't want to part with his money

Jo – I can be miserable when I feel a bit down, get in a bad mood and don't feel myself. I don't speak to anybody, but I can be cheered up!

Danny – I'm grumpy when I've got no food

Kay – signs that she can be sad

Annie – when I don't have a crème brulee

We concluded that 'miserable' people were moody, grumpy, sad and lonely and can't be happy.

So what makes us happy or joyful?

Dora and Anne – having beautiful grandchildren

Jo – going to Lourdes

Alison – having peace of mind

Stephen – Dr. Who and puppets

Kay – being on holiday

Daniel – sunny weather

Martin – meeting famous people

John – Eileen and having friends

Eileen – going out and singing

Danny – church, meeting lots of people

Pam – seeing Stuart improve

Laura – telling jokes

Annie – when granny makes rock cakes with jam

Christine – planting seeds and watching them grow

Andy – being with friends and family

Lorraine – ice cream!

Alish - black chocolate and mowing the lawn

Robin – a good curry

Margaret – my family

Fr.Frank – being with friends – especially when they welcome you after you’ve been driving all night!

Stuart – some lady came to say she was praying for me and it was really joyful. I started crying. At the club some members suffer more than me but there is great joy in them. I can’t remember things at the moment and some people suffer from this all the time. I love my friends at the Sunshine Club.

Loreto Thursday Club - are you a miserable person?

John – No!

Jonathan – yes, sometimes

Stephen – once in a blue moon when Forest lose

Martin – Mum says I’m stubborn

Bridget –people who are self-pre-occupied are miserable.

When are you joyful?

Stephen – when Forest win

Michael – I’m happy all the time

Eddie – when I’m watching ‘Strictly’

Tony – when I’m with my grandchildren or going to primary school, especially Years 1 & 2

Pat – getting a letter from someone you’ve not seen in a long time; I got 3 ‘thank you’ letters last Saturday.

Ian – cooking when left alone! Solving other peoples’ problems at work and seeing the leaves at this time of the year; going on holiday

Sr.Frances – when everybody else is happy

Martin – talking to Marianne on my phone

Derby Tuesday Club

Mervyn – sad when my Mum died; joyful when Derby win

Alberto - sad when he feels homesick; joyful when he comes on a Tuesday

Harriet – joyful when with friends; sad when she has to say goodbye

Helen – joyful when doing new things; sad when away from home

Richard – joyful when going places; sad when his grandma passed away

Millie – joyful when her brother comes home from university; sad when he goes back

Fr.Simon – joyful when he has chocolate; sad at the suffering of others

Dean – joyful when gardening; sad when missing Uncle Robert

Suzie – joyful on holidays, watching ‘Strictly’ and the prospect of the new James Bond; sad when the Great British Bake Off finished, when England went out of the World Cup and having to pay for plastic bags.

Helen – joyful when being with family

Ann – joyful when going to France; sad when I have to leave my family

Lilly – joyful at ‘Strictly’, seeing and playing with ‘Peppa’; sad when not being with Mum

Donna – joyful when looking after animals and helping people; sad seeing animals not being properly looked after.

Frank B. – joyful when with family (sometimes!); sad that people can’t live together in peace

Federico – sad when saying goodbye

Maria – sad when coming back after the holidays; exams! or when someone is angry with me

Paola – sad when I fight with my Mum

Aranza – sad when you say goodbye forever to someone you care about

Sofia – sad when loved ones die

Emmy – sad when others are sad

Ednah – Monday mornings!

Kenny – joyful when doing his stamps for charity; sad when young people are acting the goat

Yanling – joyful when helping people; sad at bad relationships with people

Eva – joyful when going out on a sunny day; sad when I see what a state the world is in

Madeleine – joyful when singing!; sad when somebody dies

Maria – ski-ing in the mountains

Bernie – dancing!

Steven – joyful being at Tuesday Club; sad when there is no Tuesday Club

Paul – being with great grandchildren and seeing them communicating and playing together

Tell stories of happy and sad or miserable people – what effect did they have on others? – make up interactive drama, eg. “Scrooge” – only happy when he was giving things away

What is ‘joy’ and when have I ever experienced a ‘yesss... moment’? – get each person to tell their stories (eg. falling in love, doing something incredible, winning a race, etc.) In Hinckley, Fr.Frank said that the end of the “Dance of the Light” and “Mother Mary” were definitely ‘Yesss’ moments for him. Alish said that it was looking at the sunset on Lough Derg. She told us about her pilgrimages there and how she nearly got arrested on the border with Ireland and the North for butter smuggling! In Nottingham, Tony said it happened to him when finishing his first marathon and doing concert ‘gigs’ with his band. Bridget said when Leicester stayed in the Premiership last season. Ian said dancing in competition and winning – going to the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool.

Somehow, joy comes as a gift and cannot be organized or created by money or human skill.

How can I make other people happy? Think of and note down some examples. In Nottingham, Martin said mowing the lawn for his Mum; Eddie said, telling jokes (!); Ian said, random acts of small kindnesses. Fr.Frank reminded us of Pope Francis’ words – ‘preach the gospel and if necessary, use word.’ This is something we can do even in small courtesies and gestures each day. Tony – told us about Morecambe and Wise – “bring me sunshine” and Cole Porter – ‘I won’t be happy till I make you happy too.’

Can you think of something that happened to you that changed your heart and your life? Remember the “happiness is....” cartoons –can we think of any ourselves? Eg. Happiness is....talking to a friend who makes you feel that everything is going to be OK....seeing your parents in good health....a beautiful smile from someone you love. Here are some ‘happiness’ quotes:

- “Remember that not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck (Dalai Lama)
- “We tend to forget that happiness doesn’t come as a result of getting something we don’t have rather than recognising and appreciating what we do have” (Frederick Keonig)
- “Count your age by friends, not years, by smiles, not tears” (John Lennon)
- “Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom” (Marcel Proust)
- “Happiness is a by-product of an effort to make someone else happy”
- “Be generous in your thoughts, deeds and things”
- “When you think you’re not happy with your life, always think that someone else is happy simply because you exist”

- “Happiness will not come to those who fail to appreciate what they already have”

Think of some sad /happy stories, eg. “The Giraffe who couldn’t dance”. Joyful messages – eg. the angel to the shepherds.

How can we be like them in our lives with each other? - cf. Mt.5:1- Beatitudes. Read these again and think if I am showing any of these attributes to others?

Am I afraid to proclaim my faith? Where might I have failed God and Jesus? – maybe write ‘sins’ on paper and then burn them together. Hymn suggestions – ‘Go Tell everyone’; ‘Our God reigns’; ‘Follow Me’, “Give me joy in my heart”

Prayer – God has chosen me (Cardinal Newman). To be a messenger you need to: think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the heart of Christ, live with the life of Christ, - we could work this prayer out in art and action and use it throughout the year. We concluded that in some ways we are already ‘Messengers of Joy’ because of how we are to each other in our groups and club nights, even without realising it. We can bring so much joy to others without using a single word!

Session 11 *Hearers and their response*

Can you think of any times in the New Testament when people reacted with joy to Jesus’ message? Look at the gospels – eg. the story of Zacchaeus – and the Acts, how the ‘message’ was welcomed with joy.

The Story of Zacchaeus

Narrator One day, Jesus was going through Jericho City. Now a very rich man called Zacchaeus lived there, where he was the manager of the tax office, and thus not one bit popular with the Jewish people. Indeed they thought that people like Zacchaeus were traitors to their own people, and so treated them like public sinners. He was keen to see what sort of man Jesus was, having heard a lot about him, but he was small and couldn’t see over the heads of the crowd.

A crowd enters with Jesus in the middle and Zacchaeus tries without success to get a look at him.

So he ran along the road Jesus was taking and climbed up a big tree

Zacchaeus mounts some steps

Jesus came along and saw him in the tree. He looked up at him and spoke to him

Jesus Zacchaeus, you'd better be quick and get down – I'm coming for dinner at your house today

Narrator Zacchaeus was delighted and got out of the tree straight away

Zacchaeus comes down from the steps and greets Jesus

But the crowd didn't like it. "Why should Jesus stay with this scoundrel?", they shouted. Then something wonderful happened to Zacchaeus. He turned and spoke to Jesus:

Zacchaeus I'm not the man they think I am, sir. Look, I will give half my income to those in need and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay them back four times over.

Narrator And Jesus replied

Jesus God himself has come to this place today, and this man belongs to God's family too. I have come to seek and find those who are lost

Reaction to Jesus:

Mt.5:23-25 – Jesus preaches and heals; hundreds brought to him

Mt.7:28-9 (22:33) (Lk.4:31) – "Jesus teaching made a deep impression on the people, because he taught them with authority, not like their own scribes"

In the synagogue, Jesus had two very different reactions:

Lk.4:22 – "And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished at the gracious words that came from his lips" but shortly afterwards.....

Lk.4:28 – "When they heard this everyone was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town."

In Capernaum...Lk.4:36 – "Astonishment seized them and they were saying to each other, 'what teaching!'"

Lk.11:46 – "A lawyer spoke up, 'Master, when you speak like this, you insult us too'"

Lk.11:54 – "When he left the house, the scribes and the Pharisees began a furious attack on him and tried to force answers from him on innumerable questions, setting traps to catch him out in something he might say."

Mt.21:23 – Jesus questioned by chief priests about his 'authority for acting like this'

vv.45-6 – they would have liked to arrest him then but were afraid of the crowds

Mt.22:1-10 – Parable of the banquet; invitations sent 'but they were not interested'

Mt.28:1-8 -Jesus' rising – the angels' message. Response? 'Filled with joy they came quickly from the tomb and ran to tell the others.

Reaction Jesus told his friends to expect:

Mt.10: 17-25 (24:9-10) – Jesus' warning to his 'missionaries' – "you will be hated by all on account of my name"

Lk.9:5 (10:11) – "As for those who do not welcome you, when you leave their town, shake the dust from your feet as a sign to them."

Mt.16:21-23 – Jesus tells his friends what is going to happen to him and they don't like it

Reaction to teaching and messages of Jesus' friends:

After Pentecost the apostles emerged from the upper room full of fire and enthusiasm, full of the Holy Spirit. Their fear disappeared and they were given many other gifts including that of being able to speak to all the people in Jerusalem in their very own language.

Acts 2:12 – "Everyone was amazed and unable to explain it; they asked one another what it all meant"

How many of us can speak different languages? Go round the room and ask.

After Peter's first preaching:

Acts 2::37,41 – "Hearing this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'what must be do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' answered Peter, 'and everyone of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.'...They were convinced by his argument and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number."

Acts 4: 1-5 Peter and John are arrested for preaching that Jesus had risen..."but many of those who had listened to their message became believers, the total number of whom had now risen to something like five thousand."

Acts 4:33 –"The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect."

But not the same reaction from the Jewish council of the Sanhedrin and those who listened to Stephen:

Acts5:33 – "This so infuriated them that they wanted to put them to death."

Acts 7:54 – "They were infuriated when they heard this and ground their teeth at him."

Acts 6:7 – "The word of the Lord continued to spread, the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased."

Acts 13:48- "It made the pagans very happy to hear this and they thanked the Lord for his message."

Acts 14:1 – "At Iconium they went to the Jewish synagogue as they had at Antioch, and they spoke so effectively that a great many Jews and Greeks became believers."

Acts 17:19-20 – "They invited him (Paul) to the Council of the Areopagus, where they said to him, 'how much of this new teaching you were speaking about are we allowed to know? Some of the things you said seemed startling to us and we would like to find out what they mean.'"

So we can see that both Jesus and his friends got a mixed reaction when they spoke their message to people – some were amazed and others were angry.

What sort of response might we get when we try to proclaim the message of joy to others? Pope Francis says:

Am I an invited guest to the dinner and don't want to come? – Lk.14:16-24.

#34 "We need to be realistic and not assume that our audience understands the full background to what we are saying or is capable of relating what we say to the very heart of the gospel, which gives it meaning, beauty and attractiveness."

#89 Today, our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to people's thirst for God...Unless these people find in the Church a spirituality which can offer healing and liberation and fill them with life and peace, while at the same time summoning them to fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness they will end up by being taken in by solutions which neither make life truly human nor give glory to God."

#113 "The salvation which God has wrought and the Church joyfully proclaims, is for everyone. God has found a way to unite himself to every human being in every age."

Do you think that people are really interested in this message? If not, why not? Is it because they have too many other things to think about or are just too concerned with themselves?

How do you feel people will respond to us when we try to bring them the message of joy from Our Lord? Will they ignore us, insult us or embrace us? We cannot always expect a ready response. Jesus took pity on the crowd because 'they were like sheep without a shepherd'. Not only did he speak to them but he also fed them, ie. did something practical. Maybe this is what we need to do as well.

Mk.6:37 "Give them something to eat yourselves..." The Hinckley group decided to put on an evening to raise awareness about what they do but also to raise some funds for the Syrian refugees stuck in Calais with nowhere to go. There were two messages to be given here: the first to the people coming, showing them what our group does and is for and the second to the people for whom we raised the money – both messages 'without words'. In

Nottingham we spoke of the ‘drop-in’ centres set up by the churches to help people who are homeless and noted that most of the major Day Centres for homeless people in the country – Emmanuel House in Nottingham, the Padley Centre in Derby, St. Wilfrid’s in Sheffield and the Passage in London, were in fact set up by the church. There are also many initiatives undertaken by the Methodist Church and the Church of England to set up soup kitchens at night and refugee centres for asylum seekers. There are Street Pastors on the streets of many cities late into the night at weekends, and of course Foodbanks and the Salvation Army, who do so much to help people in poverty including collecting children from school and feeding them until their parents can get back from work. Andy thought that we in SPANNED have also contributed massively over the years to the preaching of the gospel without words. Remember that ‘poor’ people are not necessarily people who have no homes or money – ‘poor’ really means people who cannot help themselves and need others to do so. That is why Pope Francis continually refers to the Church as the ‘Church of the poor’.

Why do people not necessarily want to hear the message of Jesus today? Because they are too selfish, greedy, blind etc., and they think that is what ‘living’ is. Sometimes it might make them uncomfortable, or even scare them with the truth. What might happen to us? What happened to some of the saints whose stories we told last year – reprise some of the ‘saints in the making’ work. NT stories such as Good Samaritan and Dives and Lazarus. Look at stories like Jerzy Popieluszko and Oscar Romero, the Maryknoll sisters and Dorothy Stang once again. Talk about situation for Christians today in Iraq, Syria and the Middle East – persecuted and suppressed. All called to announce the gospel in spite of difficulties and persecution.

“Overcome evil with good” (Rom.12:21 – consult # 271 of EV.)

Do you know anyone who fought injustice in Jesus’ name? Would you do it?

#187 *“Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully part of society. This demands that we be docile to the cries of the poor and come to their aid.”*

Lk.10:1-11 ‘Jesus said, “I am sending you out like lambs among wolves”’. We need to be positive and not negative in our messaging. Some people know nothing of God nor do they want to. Other may be curious. The Pope wants us to be the ‘church of the poor’ – who are the ‘poor’? What do they want to hear? Why do they want to listen and others do not?

Hymn suggestions – Blessed are my people, says the Lord; O let all who thirst / The Lord hears the cry of the poor

We finished with the first chapter of a specially written parable called “Without Words”

Session 12 *Be Courageous, prayerful and joyful*

Chapter 2 of “Without Words”

Mt.10:17-23 “Beware of men...they will scourge you in the synagogues. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the pagans. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes, because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you...you will be hated by all men on account of my name, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved...”

It will not be easy for us to be messengers of joy in the present climate and first of all, we will have to change our own lives and the way we do things.:

Mt.20:26-8 “Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant...for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give away his life for all..”

Courage – be brave like Jesus calling Peter to walk on the water Jn.6:16-21 – when Jesus isn’t there, we are in the shadows and in the storm. Jesus wants to bring us light to help us reach our destination.

Let’s have a discussion on what makes us afraid or embarrassed, because this is often the reason we do not become ‘messengers of joy’. Are you embarrassed to tell people you are Jesus’ friend? Would you wear a cross to show it? Shall we make some?

#10 “Those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others.... An evangelizer should never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral”

Jesus command to his friends is clear – this is how they are to be as his messengers.

Mt.5:13-16 “you are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world.

Mt.6:25, 33 “Do not worry about your life and what you are to eat and your body and how you are to clothe it...do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself...”

Mt.10:6-10 “And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. ...You received without charge; give without charge. Provide yourselves with no gold or silver, not even with a few coppers for your purses, no haversack for your journey or spare tunic, or footwear or a staff...”

Can we think of any courageous people in proclaiming the message of Jesus? If we have time, look at the DVD of Blessed Oscar Romero. If we can be joyful ourselves, it is inevitable that our joy will spill over to others:

Jn.15:11 “I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete...”

#262 “We do well to keep in mind the early Christians and our brothers and sisters throughout history who were filled with joy, unflagging courage and zeal in proclaiming the

gospel...Let us not say that things are harder today; they are simply different. But let us learn from the saints who have gone before us, who confronted the difficulties of their own day.”

Lk.1:28 “Rejoice, so highly favoured; the Lord is with you..” – this was the angel’s message to Mary when he came to tell her the most special message from God. From then on her whole life would be a message to others: “My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour”

Lk.2:9-11 “Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today, in the won of David a Saviour has been born for you. He is Christ the Lord...” This is the message to the shepherds and the message for us and everyone at Christmas.

Joy and courage come from being close to God and Jesus Christ in prayer, so that it is Jesus who is speaking through us, with or without any words.

#3 “I invite all Christians everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. ..No one should think that this invitation is not for him or her, since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”

1 Jn.1:3-4 “What we have seen and heard we are telling you, so that you too may be in union with us as we are in union with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this to you to make our own joy complete...”

#7 “I can say that the most beautiful and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little to hold on to..” Joy flows from the infinite love of God

Chapter 3 of “Without Words”

Liturgy 5 – St.John Bosco, Leicester - Sunday November 28 2015

This will incorporate work from Sessions 10-12

Hymn How lovely on the mountains

Introduction *Hinckley, Leicester and Nottingham Groups*

Reader 1 Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Leicester

Reader 2 We always love to have you with us for this First Sunday of Advent

Reader 3 This year, as you know we have been thinking about messages and messengers, what are they, who are they and how can we be messengers of joy ourselves

Reader 4 When we gathered with Bishop Patrick, we spoke about the message that Jesus gives and the message he asked his first friends and all of us today to give for him

Reader 5 We are to be messengers of joy, as Pope Francis tells us

Reader 6 But in order to be a messenger of joy you have to be a joyful person

Reader 1 So we've asked in our groups if we are joyful or miserable people

Reader 2 And what makes us happy and what makes us sad

Group members use smiley or misery faces as appropriate here

Reader 3 So are you a miserable person?

Shirley I am a miserable person because I am unable to appreciate and understand others and am usually in a bad mood

Everyone No you aren't!!

Stuart I've had a couple of miserable acting roles acting roles – "MOSSO" – the 'miserable old so-and-so' and "Scrooge" – he was miserable because he didn't want to part with his money

Jo I can be miserable when I feel a bit down, get in a bad mood and don't feel myself. I don't speak to anybody, but I can be cheered up!

Reader 4 Danny says I'm grumpy when I've got no food

Reader 5 Kay – signs that she can be sad

Annie when I don't have a crème brulee

Reader 1 Stephen gets miserable once in a blue moon when Forest lose

Everyone Once in a blue moon? Who are you kidding?

Bridget people who are self-pre-occupied are miserable.

Reader 3 And that's what we concluded: 'miserable' people were moody, grumpy, sad and lonely and can't be happy.

Reader 4 They're going to be no good as messengers of joy then?

Reader 5 Certainly not

Reader 6 So what makes us happy or joyful?

Tony Dora, Anne and I said having beautiful grandchildren

- Jo going to Lourdes
- Alison having peace of mind
- Reader 1 Kay said being on holiday and Daniel said sunny weather
- John Eileen makes me happy and having friends
- Eileen going out and singing
- Reader 2 Danny said church, meeting lots of people
- Reader 3 Stephen said when Forest win
- Reader 4 You're not happy very often, then, are you?
- Reader 5 Eddie says when I'm watching 'Strictly'
- Pat getting a letter from someone you've not seen in a long time
- Ian cooking when left alone! Solving other peoples' problems at work and seeing the leaves at this time of the year; going on holiday
- Robin A good curry!
- Reader 6 We are all called to be messengers of joy, to spread happiness to others in what we say and do. That's a big challenge, isn't it?

Rite of Penance

Priest Whenever our life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others – this is also the message of Pope Francis to us all. He means that if we think too much about ourselves, we cannot see Jesus and we cannot make him known to others. And so we tell Jesus that we are sorry for all the times **we** have not listened to his message to us and not wanted to share it with others:

Lord Jesus Christ you are our brother and our friend, Lord have mercy

All Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our healer and our Saviour, Christ have mercy

All Christ have mercy

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our Lord and our God, Lord have mercy

All Lord have mercy

Priest May Almighty God have mercy on us...

Prayer Loving Father, we come together today to remind ourselves of the message of joy which Jesus asks us to give to others and pray that we may be able to do so. Help us to be happy and strong so that we can persevere when we are disappointed and show everyone something of the love and goodness that you have shown to us in Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord.

First Reading *Derby Group*

Reader 1 So who will help us to be messengers of joy?

Reader 2 Who will show us what to say and do for him?

Reader 1 Who will guide us in the right way?

Reader 2 Who will help us when no one seems to want to listen to our message?

Reader 1 It is the Holy Spirit of God himself, who came to Jesus' first friends at Pentecost

Reader 2 To fill them with fire and enthusiasm, with courage and love

Reader 1 Last time, we mimed what happened to them when they received the Spirit but what happened after that?

The disciples come out with placards saying 'Jesus is Lord'

Reader 2 They went out into the street and found they could speak in so many different languages so that all the people from so many different countries in Jerusalem could actually understand them

Reader 1 People were amazed and astonished at what they saw and many of them became believers in Jesus there and then

Both This is the Word of the Lord

Psalm O the Word of my Lord (*sung*)

Gospel *Loughborough Group*

Narrator 1 Here is a story from St.Luke's gospel about a man who had heard about Jesus and wanted to see and hear him for himself

Reading from Session 11 pp.55-56

Homily *Nottingham Group*

Reader 1 We know what happened when Jesus spoke, of course. Some people were amazed and astonished at him

Reader 2 But others were angry because he was saying that they were nasty people and not God's friends at all

Crowd boo

Reader 1 So what happened to Jesus' friends when they went to tell people his message?

Reader 2 Jesus told them that they will be 'hated by all' because of him – gosh! – and when they left a town where they were not welcomed, to shake off the dust of that town from their feet

Reader 1 Sometimes they were well received

Reader 2 When Peter began preaching, we are told by the Acts of the Apostles: "They were convinced by his argument and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number."

Crowd cheer

Reader 1 And shortly afterwards Peter and John are arrested for preaching that Jesus had risen..."but many of those who had listened to their message became believers, the total number of whom had now risen to something like five thousand."

Crowd cheer

Reader 1 "The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect."

Crowd cheer

Reader 2 But they didn't get the same reaction from the Jewish council of the Sanhedrin and those who listened to Stephen. "This so infuriated them that they wanted to put him to death," which they did, of course, by stoning him

Crowd boo

Reader 1 St.Paul was sent to be the messenger of Jesus to those who had no religious faith

Reader 2 "It made the pagans very happy to hear this and they thanked the Lord for his message."

Crowd cheer

Reader 1 So we can see that both Jesus and his friends got a mixed reaction when they spoke their message to people – some were amazed and others were angry.

Reader 2 What sort of response might we get when we try to proclaim the message of joy to others?

Reader 1 Let's pray that they receive it well and become joyful people themselves

Bidding Prayers *Scunthorpe Group*

Priest Dear Father, please listen to us as we want to listen to you

Reader 1 We pray that we may all learn how to listen to you and each other, so that we may know what you want to say to us. Lord hear us

Reader 2 Help us to be joyful people, not mean, miserable or moody, so that other people will be drawn to you through our happiness at being your friends. Lord hear us

Reader 3 We pray for those people who do not listen to anyone, especially those who are trying to get them to change their minds for the sake of what is right. Lord hear us

Reader 4 We pray for peace in our world, for an end to all the killing of innocent people that has been going on everywhere. Our message to them is: stop and stop now. Lord hear us

Reader 5 We thank you for our groups and clubs, for all the friends we have met, for all the work we have done and for all the happiness we have shared. Lord hear us

Reader 6 We pray for our new bishop, Patrick, that he will be strong, loving and cheerful as our shepherd. Lord hear us

Reader 7 We pray for our brothers Father Frank and Father Peter, who have been priests for 40 years this year. We thank you for your messages that you have given us through them and that they have shown us how to spread that message to others. Please bless them with health and strength in your service. Lord hear us

Reader 8 We pray for all our family and friends who have died; please bring them into your light for ever. Lord hear us

Reader 9 Now we ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary

Priest In praying the prayer of the servant church we ask God particularly to help us to speak with the words of Jesus to everyone, so that his message will be heard everywhere:

Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind of Christ, see with the eyes of Christ, speak with the words of Christ, serve with the hands of Christ, love with the heart of Christ and live with the life of Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever.

Offertory Hymn I give my hands

Prayer Dear Father, we bring you this bread; we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves. Help us always to make our lives an offering of praise and thanks to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

Preface God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you through Jesus Christ who is our Lord. From the very beginning of time you spoke a message to your people in the things that you did for them, but so often they did not listen or take any notice of you. Then you sent them Jesus your Son, who is your last Word to us. Jesus came to speak your Word but also to be your Word, to show us how to live in your way every day. He calls us now as he did his first friends to be his messengers of joy, so that everyone will come to know of you and your love. And so we thank you with all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy

Eucharistic Prayer No.3

Communion Music The Lord is my light (*Rizza*)

Communion Hymn I will be with you

After Communion *Leicester Group*

Reader 1 It will not be easy for us to be messengers of joy in the present climate and first of all, we will have to change our own lives and the way we do things.:

Reader 2 Jesus says: "Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant...for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give away his life for all." And then..."Do not worry about your life and what you are to eat and your body and how you are to clothe it...do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself..."

Reader 1 We will need to be brave like when Jesus called Peter to walk on the water: when Jesus isn't there, we are in the shadows and in the storm. Jesus wants to bring us light to help us reach our destination.

- Reader 2 We must never be afraid or embarrassed to tell people that we are Jesus' friends
- Reader 1 And we must be joyful. Jesus says: "I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete..."
- Reader 2 Pope Francis says: "An evangelizer should never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral... We do well to keep in mind the early Christians and our brothers and sisters throughout history who were filled with joy, unflagging courage and zeal in proclaiming the gospel... Let us not say that things are harder today; they are simply different. But let us learn from the saints who have gone before us, who confronted the difficulties of their own day."
- Reader 1 Joy and courage come from being close to God and Jesus Christ in prayer, so that it is Jesus who is speaking through us, with or without any words.
- Reader 2 Pope Francis tells us: "I invite all Christians everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. ..No one should think that this invitation is not for him or her, since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord"
- Reader 1 Jesus' first friends have a message for us as we begin our task as messengers of joy: "What we have seen and heard we are telling you, so that you too may be in union with us as we are in union with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this to you to make our own joy complete..."
- Reader 2 We are to be messengers of joy because Jesus calls us and because we want to make our world a better place. That is what we will be thinking about in our last group session this year
- Reader 1 And then we will celebrate Christmas once again. This where we started out way back in January and this is where we finish: "Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today, in the town of David a Saviour has been born for you. He is Christ the Lord..."
- Reader 2 And next year, our 40th anniversary year, we will be looking for new ways to proclaim our message of joy from SPANNED to everyone. Come and join us in the excitement that this will certainly bring.
- Prayer** Dear Father, we thank you for the joy you give us through our friendship in SPANNED; may we spread this joy as your message to the world and so help to make it a better place for all of us to live in together. We ask this through Christ our Lord

Blessing

Session 13 *To make a better world*

Chapter 4 of “Without Words”

We are now nearing the end of our project this year – or is it really the beginning? Why are we sent to be ‘Messengers of Joy?’ Because Jesus wants to save the world from itself, to show us another way to live apart from selfishness and greed and the suffering they cause. Think of so many things that have been happening in the last year both in the world and in our own country, so much suffering that has arisen from the greed of one person or persons and their desire to get their own way or make others do what they want. Listen carefully to the words of “Without Words” to hear a story which actually puts this feeling into words and describes what can happen because of it and what can happen if the message of Jesus is listened to, even when it is not spoken directly in words.

Jesus says: “Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant...for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give away his life for all..” (Mt.20:26-8)

“Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate; do not judge and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; grant pardon and you will be pardoned..” (Lk.6:36-38)

“You are sad now, but I shall see you again and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you...” (Jn.17:22)

We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that... “Wherever the disciples went, there was great joy...” (8:8) and “Even amidst persecution they “continued to be filled with joy...” (13:52)

St.Paul says: “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice..” (Phil.4:4) and...“Warn those who are rich in this world’s good that they are not to look down on other people and not to set their hopes on money.. but on God, who, out of his riches, gives us all we need for our happiness. Tell them that they are to do good and be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share..” (1 Tim.6:17-19)

Pope Francis tells us:

“The gospel is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be the setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity.” (EV para.180)

“An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it....The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters...All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world” (para.183)

“Christians have the duty to proclaim the gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy” (para.15)

“Encounter with God’s love frees us from our narrowness and self-absorption” (para.8) and “Goodness always tends to spread..” (para.9)

Every afternoon, during the Blessed Sacrament procession in Lourdes, we pray, “to help us make a better world”. So how can we make our world a better place? This is a big question but one we need to think about and answer, if we are to be messengers of joy. Remember Cardinal Newman’s prayer from last year on how we accept our calling from Jesus to be – ‘angel of peace in my own place, even while not intending it’. Tease out the words above and see where they might relate to our particular situation. Sing the beautiful song, “Peace will come, but let it begin with me”.

Care for the planet and its people is very important. Let us look again next year at some of the material from the LiveSimply project, and at the words of Pope Francis from his special letter, “Laudato Si”. The message of joy is about forgetting ourselves and what we want in order to be truly free. This is what Jesus calls us to live and proclaim every day in order to make our world a better place, and we can think of many ways in which to do this. In our 40th anniversary year, we will try very hard to take our message of joy to more people so that they too can learn to rejoice in the life Jesus offers us and help us to change the world we live in so that it may reflect more truly the beauty, the love and the majesty of the God who made us all.

Chapter 5 of “Without Words”

Hymn suggestions – Make me a channel of your peace / Lord make me a means of your peace

Thanks be to God

Appendix 1 “Without Words” – a short story of Messengers of Joy

Here is a parable about preaching the message of Jesus ‘without

Chapter 1

Camilla Johnson was the school bully, simultaneously the queen and the scourge of Edendale High. Everyone in Form 11E was frightened of her; most of the school staff were frightened of her too. She was glamorous all right; no one could possibly guess that she was only 16. The male staff were scared of being the slightest bit friendly with her in case it might be misinterpreted, which she was more than inclined to do if it suited her. A simple allegation could be the end of their careers. It was an amazing power for a student to have over a teacher. The female staff were jealous of her because it seemed, she could get away with

anything, but had no answer to her aggressive behaviour and foul language uttered all too frequently in their direction. She seemed to have no fear whatsoever. Each exclusion for disciplinary reasons was worn like a trophy around her neck, a new string to her bow of notoriety. Yet school was her theatre, the place she liked to be, the place where she could dominate, control and humiliate fellow pupils and even the weaker members of staff. This was where she was famous and feared and, in a rather perverse sort of way, she liked it and thrived on it – like a drug. She got a buzz out of insulting the boys who thought they were handsome, attractive and cool. She was thrilled by making other girls cry with fear and frustration. Each September with a whole Year 7 coming was a delight and a challenge to her. How many could she insult and humiliate, and cower into submission before the end of the first week of term? That was all she thought about, what made the days passable. In many ways, she seemed to be what all of them wanted to be – fearless and cool – she was their hero. They looked up to her because she could get away with so much. They wanted to emulate her if only they had the courage. She gained a sort of coterie of ‘disciples’ who hung around with her and hung on her every word and gesture. They felt safe and secure in her company and came to enjoy the way in which she treated people. It was good to be around her, so they thought, better than being in a big school like that on your own.

But there was a darker, more fearful side to Camilla that none of them knew about, that she wanted no one to know about. She lived in a big house in the suburbs and wanted for nothing. Everything she ever asked for she was given and it had always been that way. But it was a pretence. Her father, who was ‘something in the city’ had left the family home when she was 8 years old; apparently he had grown tired of her mother and wanted a ‘younger model’. Her mother had never worked but had busied herself with all sorts of meaningless activities, coffee shops, the gym, and latterly Facebook, where she had gained countless virtual friends, an obsession she had passed on to her daughter, who logged on each evening when she got home from school for a chat with people whom she would never meet and never befriend for real. Daddy left them well provided-for, which he could easily afford. The mortgage was paid in full and a very generous monthly allowance for them both was always forthcoming. Camilla went to stay with him and his new partner from time to time, holidays in the villa in Spain and weekends in the country. She didn’t like the woman who was quite as shallow as her mother and she couldn’t help but feel that her father was generous to her only because he felt guilty. The fact was that Camilla did not feel loved and wanted. She was no more than an inconvenience to both of her parents, and nothing could persuade her otherwise. She was very well off but actually abandoned. That is why she took out her frustration and loneliness on others, and while it gave her a sense of importance that was lacking at home, she nevertheless felt guilty that she was hurting so many other people. It was as if she was trapped. She couldn’t let her face down; she couldn’t tell anyone what she really felt because she had no real friends. It was really a very lonely life, but covered up by aggression and swearing and by just being plain awkward. She had no idea of what might happen when she left school, when her so-called friends went elsewhere and she would have no one herself. What could she do with her life? Where would she end up and with whom? She tried not to think of it but

the prospect kept her awake at nights. For all her bravado and bullishness, Camilla Johnson was not a happy person. She was sad and lonely, unwanted, and covered it all up by being as nasty and difficult as it was possible to be, particularly with those around her who seemed to come from happy homes, who were loved, and cared for. She made it her business to make their life hell out of sheer jealousy. The more she made them suffer, the more she felt she could compensate for all the warmth and loved of which she was continually deprived herself. And so she became the school bully, feared and feted with followers in tow. She was the No.1 in Edendale High School and that was all that mattered to her- for the moment. But something was about to happen to Camilla that would change her life forever....

Chapter 2

Kelly Sterling was very apprehensive as she walked up the road for her first morning at her new school. She was still in shock at the manner of her arrival there – having to leave her home down south in a hurry as her Dad’s business crashed through no fault of his own. His customers were too slow or unwilling to pay him and he just couldn’t afford to keep going. This was the way of the world now. No one thought they had any obligations to anyone, so the receivers had to be called in, the house repossessed and a whole family to suffer the ignominy of losing their home and having to move elsewhere quickly. Kelly had lost all of her good friends, who had been at school with her together for 10 years and more –she didn’t even have time to say ‘goodbye’ to many of them and that hurt her and them. Her exam course work would be of little use in a new school with a different syllabus and only a year to go before the GCSE’s had to be taken. This misfortune simply could not have happened at a worse time for her and all of them. The immediate future was very frightening indeed and she had seen the desperation on the faces of her parents, who had always provided for her and her brother Harry. And so they arrived in Cumbria, where Kelly’s aunt owned a holiday cottage which she allowed them to live in at a modest rent until her Dad got started again. She would need it back at the start of the holiday season next April, but by then Kelly should have been well into her exams and maybe Dad would have found something. He was going to down to Liverpool most days to try to find some work to tide things over and Mum was looking for cleaning jobs in the area, but there wasn’t much going for them. They were not proud people and would have been satisfied with the least of jobs as long as it meant they could keep their family together. They hoped and prayed that everything would eventually work out but it didn’t look like it at the moment.

There was one very significant thing, however, for this family in such a state of misfortune. The air was clean and pure in this part of Cumbria, quite different to that where they had come from on the outskirts of London, and so it would be good for Harry. In the end, that was all that mattered to Kelly and her parents –it would be good for Harry. Her nine year old brother had been born with a very limiting condition of the lung called cystic fibrosis or CF. His lungs didn’t function as they should and often they got clogged up with mucus so that he regularly needed a treatment called postural draining, which involved his being placed over his mother’s knee face down and his back being smacked in just the right place so that the

mucus could work itself out of his lungs. This ‘percussion’ as it was called, was often unpleasant and painful for Harry as also for those who had to administer it to him but he never complained. That is because all that Harry ever did was smile. It was the most radiant, warm and loving smile that drew you into him and made you want to do more and more for him to alleviate his suffering. Kelly had learned how to do the percussion as well and delighted in the opportunity to give her mother a break and do this thing for her little brother, who was, quite simply, the centre of her world. He also had a speech difficulty and was unable to say anything really distinctly, but for Kelly, the smile said it all. She loved him and he loved her, and because she knew that the life of this frail little boy might not last for an awful lot longer, her every waking thought was directed to how she might make it better for him. She had sacrificed for him so much of what other teenagers take for granted and even demanded, but all of that was meaningless and false to her: going out, shopping, boyfriends (maybe!) and she didn’t mind one bit. Others could call her anti-social, preoccupied, obsessed even, but she didn’t care. This beautiful crippled boy with the biggest smile she had ever seen was the light of her life. He was brave and cheerful, much more than Kelly thought she could ever be herself if she happened to be in a similar situation, and so she idolised and adored him. Nothing was too much trouble to make his life even a little better even for a short time, whatever time it took. More than this, she felt that he had taught her something really precious –he had shown her what was truly important in life. So many of her peers were completely overtaken by the attraction of social media – texts, twitter, blogs, Facebook. To her this was simply a virtual world of illusory friendships and fascination with meaningless details of people’s lives which were so vital to them but in fact were not one bit interesting to anyone else, even though they themselves were convinced they were. Kelly would have none of it. Her only concessions to modern media were her basic phone and Harry’s I-Pad, which helped him to speak as he tapped out words on it, thus enabling him to communicate what was in him with others. His sister loved to ‘chat’ with him on the machine in the evenings and marvelled at his intelligence and vivid imagination. She found herself confiding in him, which was incredible given the fact that there was six years age difference between them, but he seemed to be compassionate and gifted enough to understand some of her frustrations and the difficulties she had with some people she had been at school with. For a little boy, he was in fact quite mature with a brain and a heart way beyond his tender years. Not only was he her little brother, but also in fact her best friend as well. He could say so much to her without actually ‘saying’ a word and that was marvellous.

These things and so many others were swirling around in her mind as she walked up the road that morning. What lay ahead was going to be a real struggle, nothing of course like the struggle her brother faced every single day, but a struggle nevertheless. But Kelly Sterling was determined, despite all that had happened to her and her family. She had her mind firmly set on what she wanted to be and do with her life, and this mishap would not swerve her intention one bit. Kelly wanted to be a paediatric nurse, looking after children with limited life conditions, like her brother. She had found through him that she was good at it –he always told her so on his machine himself- and there was not a single doubt in her mind about

it. She didn't know what she would have to face that day or in the weeks and months ahead. She knew she would have to work long and hard hours in this strange place with strangers all around, to catch up but she would succeed. She would get there, if not for herself then for his sake, Harry, her lovely brother, the light of her life. She wondered how it would be in Edendale High School, Form 11E – would she make new friends easily or were their friendship groups too firmly formed to allow her in? No matter. Her best friend would be waiting tonight and every night for her at home, anxious to find out how she'd managed on her first day. Neither he nor she could know that before very much longer she would encounter the attentions of Camilla Johnson and her cronies, and that this might be her biggest challenge of all.

Chapter 3

Thankfully it's not a huge place, unlike my last school, Kelly thought to herself as she walked through the gate. She had gone early before most of the other students so that she could find her way round before classes began. Miss Singleton, the Deputy Head, was there to meet her as she entered through the front door. She was a pleasant woman, probably one of those who had given her life to teaching and thus had not married - sad that. She introduced her to a girl from 11E called Laura, who had volunteered to come in early to meet her and show her round. Kelly was struck by the warmth and sincerity of Laura and was immediately at ease. As they walked along the corridors, Kelly thought that the school had a nice feel to it and seemed friendly – everyone seemed to know everyone else and smiled; quite unusual that for a place full of pouting teenagers, she thought, but she was glad. Maybe this wouldn't be too much of a problem after all. Laura showed her round the main buildings of the school then took her to the form room and introduced her to four equally charming young people – Kenny Oliver, Charlotte and Grace - who all seemed genuinely pleased to meet her and anxious to make her welcome. It was then she noticed in the corner of the room a huddle of young people around a very glamorous-looking girl who seemed to be holding the floor and their undivided attention. Periodically they would look over their shoulders at Kelly and smirk. "Who are they?" she asked her new friends. "That," said Kenny, "is Camilla Johnson and the disciples. You need to keep well away from them because they are nothing but bad news." The others whispered similar warnings and Kelly noticed that the group around Camilla continued to smirk and laugh at her from a distance. "There's our new prey," said Camilla to them, "I wonder how long we'll take to break her". And they secretly laid bets on how long it would take before the new girl would be a whimpering wreck in front of them. The first lesson began – French with Mlle.Fourniquet, who was elegant, but a bit nervous, being on a year's secondment from France and who welcomed Kelly in her own language. When Kelly replied, thanking her in faultless French, everyone looked round at her, amazed at her confidence and skill. The syllabus didn't seem to be too different from that in her old school and this was good news, likewise with the English class that followed, led by Mr.Simpson, a pale-faced spiky-haired young man, who looked a bit scruffy, but seemed to know his stuff. Kelly noticed that he was very wary of Camilla, whenever she looked at him and tried to turn away. Break arrived, and the first two lessons were over – challenge one overcome, thought

Kelly. But as she was making her way out of the classroom, Camilla and her friends surrounded her in a rather threatening manner. Laura, who was on the outside of the circle, began to look worried. “So you’re the new girl, are you?” Camilla asked. “Yes, I’m Kelly; pleased to meet you”, and put out her hand. Camilla inspected it mockingly and commented, “Oh look girls, such plain nails – you could do with some varnish, dear to cover them up”. “I believe that is not allowed, at least according to the school prospectus,” Kelly answered, “along with make-up, jewellery, short skirts and fashion shoes”, she said, noticing that all of these items were displayed all too obviously on Camilla’s person. “Ah yes, the school prospectus, the school rules”, she replied and threw her head back in raucous laughter. The disciples, as if on cue, joined in. “And you are...?” asked Kelly. “Don’t you know, dear? Didn’t anyone tell you? Well, you soon will, and you will know that what I say goes around here; the rules don’t apply to us. They’re just for the pathetic people like you and all of these”, she said, pointing to Laura and the others who were still lingering in the background. “You have a rather strange, accent, dear, and your hair is a bit of a mess,” said Camilla condescendingly, “but we’ll soon sort that out for you, won’t we girls?” Then, coldly and threateningly she said, “get her bag” and one of the disciples snatched it away from Kelly and looked inside it. They pulled out her phone, turned it on and laughed: “hardly the latest model is it?” “It does well for me,” answered Kelly calmly. “And who’s the mong on the screen?” Camilla asked, looking mockingly at the photo of Harry. “That is my brother, Harry”, Kelly replied. “Oh yes, we’ve heard all about him. He’s the spastic isn’t he? Yeah he looks pretty spastic to me”. “Spastic, spastic, spastic” they all chanted in unison, and Kelly waited for them to finish. “Spasticity,” she said, “is a feature which involves the stiffening of the joints and involuntary movement caused by associated with a condition called Cerebral Palsy or CP. My brother has a condition called Cystic Fibrosis or CF, which is a progressive disease of his lungs, causing him to be unable to bring up mucus. I would have thought that anyone with a modicum of intelligence would know the difference.” Camilla was somewhat taken aback by this veiled insult and retorted, “well, he’s still a spastic to us, isn’t he girls?” They all laughed and she guessed she had touched a raw nerve, but she was quite unprepared for what was about to happen. Kelly grabbed her wrist in a vice-like grip and twisted her arm up her back to loosen the phone from her hand. Then she stared calmly even coldly into her face and said: “we girls from the East End of London might have funny accents and seem a bit strange to you northerners, but we know how to look after ourselves, so allow me to give you a gentle but firm warning. If you ever speak about my brother like that again, I will personally make sure that you regret it for the rest of your life, and I do not make idle threats. Possibly had you met my brother, you wouldn’t dream of speaking like that about him, and you are quite welcome to meet him at my house any time you choose to see what complete idiots you have just made of yourselves. And now, I’ll have my bag back, if you don’t mind.” The bag was quickly handed back, its holder still reeling in shock at what had happened. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I believe we have science next.” She turned on her heel, went over to Laura and the others and left the room. Laura was full of excitement in the corridor, “Wow, did you see that? No one’s ever dared to speak to Camilla like that. Just wait till this gets round the school. Camilla’s street cred will take a huge dive now” “Laura,” Kelly said,

“these people are nobodies, poseurs who think they’re somebody, a pain I really don’t need just now. I’m not going to waste my time playing silly bitchy games with these children – it’s time they grew up.” Kelly had passed her first major challenge with flying colours. She would tell Harry all about it when she got home and hoped he would be proud of her for sticking up for him, and not letting him down when they were insulting him. Camilla was in shock for the rest of that day. She had met her equal, and soon everyone would know about it. Already she noticed people laughing in groups when she passed and whispering Kelly’s name. This girl was certainly different. She was calm and self-assured and had broken the aura of invincibility around Camilla. She tried to regain her composure and her status with her disciples but she had been dealt a very serious blow by this episode. She seethed inside and vowed revenge. This newcomer would cower in fear and humiliation one day soon and this became an obsession with Camilla. In the days ahead she tried so many things to insult and catch Kelly out, taking care never to mention her brother, but all to no avail. Her disciples started to wander away from her company, and often she was left alone, angry and frustrated. Her position as the queen of Edendale High was now undermined and her influence rapidly disappearing. The flaws in the character of Camilla Johnson and the pains she had so carefully tried to hide came slowly to the surface.

Chapter 4

Camilla spent her evenings at home plotting how to subdue this girl who had ruined her authority in Edendale High, and almost became obsessed by it. She will be cowered into submission, she will be, Camilla thought, and then I will regain my proper place as the queen once again. But her authority was waning and she no longer held people in fear. Even the staff, previously so reserved and even frightened, gained new courage. “Heh, Camilla, I hear someone’s finally got the better of you...not before time”; “Fancy you being outclassed by a new girl, Camilla. Who would have thought that?” The brats in Year 7, previously quaking in their shoes, would sing out “Kelly beat Camilla, Kelly beat Camilla”. These insults hurt her and cut her to the quick, and she now realised what it felt like to be on the end of so much she herself had done to others. It was not a nice place. Then, one day, she got a brilliant idea: why don’t I go and see this ‘mong’, this ‘spastic’ or whatever Kelly didn’t like him being called? Why don’t I go in there and see for myself. Then I could humiliate her right there in front of her brother. That would really get to her; that would show her. The next morning as she encountered Kelly in the corridor, surrounded by admiring students as she herself had once been, she said, “I think I would like to take you up on your kind offer and meet your brother after all”. Kelly smiled that self-assured smile that Camilla had come to hate and replied, “OK, why don’t you come home with me for tea tomorrow after school? We don’t have much in the way of posh nosh, I’m afraid, but you’ll be very welcome.” Harry was quite worried when she told him that evening: “You’ve actually invited that bully here into our home?” he tapped out on the screen, “Are you sure about this?” “Oh yes, Harry, “ replied his sister, “I am sure that you will charm her and captivate her and that she’ll be like putty in your hands. Harry smiled.

The next evening as they walked to the house from the bus, Kelly was chatty and kind. It was as if there had never been a disagreement of any sort between them, there never had been any bullying. She treated Camilla like a friend, and this unnerved Camilla, who was still set on revenge, but whose resolve was slowly waning the more the conversation proceeded. "I'm sorry our home isn't posh" she said. "actually, it's only a holiday home that belongs to aunty Jane, but we're living here until we can find somewhere a bit more permanent. But the air up here is clean and good for Harry. He's been ten times better since we arrived, and that's great. She then proceeded to tell Camilla all about her brother, his condition, how it affected him and all of them, how much she loved and respected him, how he was her real 'hero', and how much she was afraid that he wouldn't live for too much longer. Before Camilla even arrived at the house, something very strange started to happen to her. She was being treated as an equal by a girl she hardly knew, a girl whom she had insulted and humiliated, a girl who was humble and joyful even though she was so worried. She found herself charmed by her, and respected that she had been taken into her confidence. Camilla Johnson had never been treated like this before and found herself longing to meet this special boy, whom she had previously called all sorts of nasty names, before she ever got near his home.

They arrived and Kelly's Mum was very apologetic. "I'm so sorry, I've got to go out – an interview for a cleaning job in the local primary school. Say your prayers I'll get it Kelly. I've left tea for you two and Harry and I'll be back presently. I hope you won't think we're being unwelcoming, Camilla." "Oh no, certainly not," Camilla found herself replying, and thinking to herself, "what a really nice lady". They went in and there he was, sitting on the sofa, watching TV with his I – pad on his knee. Kelly went right up to him and gave him the biggest hug and then said, "Harry, this is my new friend, Camilla", and he stretched out his hand to her. She took it, gingerly, and wondered just how she had suddenly become the 'new friend' of a girl she had treated so badly. "I'm sorry we don't have too many chairs," Kelly said; "it's only a holiday home after all. You sit there next to Harry and I'll make some tea." Camilla carefully placed herself next to Harry and he gave her that smile, tapping out a message on the pad – "Friend?" – and then put his hand over hers. Camilla melted on the spot. This cruel, selfish and self-absorbed girl was immediately and seemingly miraculously transformed. "Yes, I hope so, that would be nice". "Great", was the tapped reply. Kelly's Mum went off for the interview; she kissed Harry and he wrote 'Good luck' on the pad. Kelly brought in tea for them and sat down. "It's chilli tonight," she said, "Harry's favourite. I hope that's all right with you." "Oh yes," Camilla said, "especially if it's Harry's favourite." And Harry smiled at her. They got through tea and it wasn't too bad, and they were just settling down when it happened, completely without warning. Harry went grey in the face and started gasping. Kelly recognised the signs straight away, picked him up and threw him over her knee. "Camilla," she said authoritatively, "go into the kitchen and get a bowl and a towel, quickly." Camilla didn't argue with her when she spoke like that and as she returned from the kitchen, Kelly was thumping his back, to bring up the mucus that was stuck in his lungs into the bowl that she had brought in. A few minutes of this treatment and Harry's colour returned and his sister lifted him gently back on to the sofa. He gave her a brilliant smile and then one

to Camilla. “Harry’s saying, ‘thanks’, Kelly said to Camilla who was still in shock at what she had seen. “How often does this happen?” she asked. “Well he needs the ‘percussion’ as we call it a couple of times a day and then sometimes we get an episode like this without warning. It was scary at first but we’ve all got used to it now and know what to do,” Kelly replied, and Camilla marvelled at the quickness of thought and skill that was necessary to keep Harry alive. She had never seen anything remotely like it before.

Shortly afterwards, Kelly’s Mum returned. “Anything exciting?” she asked, and Kelly told her what had happened in a rather matter of fact way. Harry just smiled. “It’s lucky you’ve got such a good sister who knows how to look after you”, she said to Harry, who smiled again. “How did you get on, Mum?”, Kelly asked. “They said they’d let me know. I’d have to work for three hours most nights after school, they said, but I don’t know if I could do that what with Harry being here and all. Anyway, we’ll see what they say.” “Would you like to see my room?” Kelly asked Camilla. “Yes, please,” said Camilla and they went off upstairs as Harry’s Mum began to get him ready for bed. It was a small room with sparse decoration but a few photos on the wall and a crucifix, which Camilla noticed straight away. “You religious?” she asked. “Not really, just a bit. We go to church most weekends and there’s a good youth group there on Sunday evenings. I’ve even managed to take Harry a couple of times, when the weather’s been fine. He had a great time.” “I don’t do all that ‘Jesus stuff’”, Camilla answered, “I hope I’m not offending you”. “Not in the least” was the reply. “Look here’s Harry at the Safari Park – he loved that but worried Mum to death, and that’s us in Lourdes, when we went on pilgrimage – that was fantastic; you meet such lovely people there. And that’s his last birthday party with a few friends.”

They sat on the bed and chatted easily. Kelly told Camilla what she wanted to do with herself and how they had come to be in Cumbria because her Dad’s kitchen business went bust when nobody from the developing company he worked for paid him. She talked of the humiliation of losing her home and her friends and what it had cost her to move north. “Then you had the misfortune to meet a bitch like me,” Camilla said. “Oh you’re not too bad, really, just a bit insecure and maybe not loved as much as you need to be”. “How do you know that?” Camilla asked. “I’m afraid, it’s rather obvious – people who bully and are cruel to others are like that because someone’s done that to them, and I’m sorry if it’s happened to you.” “Kelly,” said Camilla, “I’m so sorry for the way I have treated you; I’ve been so awful. I don’t deserve to be your friend, or Harry’s”. “Well you are now, so there,” said Kelly and gave her a hug. Camilla then proceeded to unburden herself of all the pain and rejection she had experienced and found Kelly a marvellous listener; she was so sympathetic and understanding. At the end both of them were in tears, hugging each other, and Camilla was delighted that for the first time in her life, she had found a friend who cared for her just as she was. She was almost overwhelmed with joy. She was a totally changed person.

They came downstairs just as the front doorbell rang and Camilla’s mother was there to collect her. “I had some difficulty finding the place,” she said, “it’s a bit out of the way”. She was about to dash off out again when Camilla stopped her. “Mum, you must come and meet

Harry; he's lovely. Her mother was anxious to get away from the place and back to Facebook or some nonsense that was occupying her at the time and reluctantly agreed. One smile from Harry did the trick and she stayed for another half an hour. "I hope you'll come again really soon," Kelly's mother said to Camilla as she gave her a kiss on the way out, and Harry wrote on his tablet "COME BACK SOON – PLEASE!" "Oh, yes, I'd love to; I'd really love to," Camilla replied as she got into the car. On the journey home, her mother noticed something on Camilla's face that she had not seen since she was a very young child. Camilla Johnson was smiling.

Chapter 5

Next morning Edendale High was quite a different place. Camilla was being polite to the staff, calling them 'sir' or 'miss' and going out of her way to be nice to the Year 7's who immediately became suspicious, wondering she was ill or something. She was anxiously looking round for Kelly to arrive and was overjoyed when she did so. Her 'disciples' simply couldn't believe what had happened to her. "I really enjoyed last evening," she told Kelly. "Harry is just great, isn't he?" "Oh yes, just great", Kelly replied. "Well Mum got offered the job, so that's good but it's going to be a bit of a struggle because of leaving Harry. I can cope with him if anything happens, but the two nights she'll have to work late might be a bit difficult." Camilla didn't believe what she was about to say but the words were out before she could stop them, "Look, I could come and help you if you don't mind. I'm only sitting at home struggling with homework on my own, so I could bring it and do it with you, if that's all right and I wouldn't be in the way". "Well, we'd be delighted Camilla. Are you sure?" "Oh yeah; you're good at French and English and I'm useless, so I'd be glad of a bit of help anyway, to tell you the truth." "OK," said Kelly, "I'll talk to Mum and let you know tomorrow." Kelly's mother was a bit hesitant at first because she knew what Camilla had done to her but she agreed, when Harry tapped out, "please let her come; I like her". And so began a close and regular friendship between two young girls who had been at odds with each other so dramatically. Camilla became a frequent visitor and was completely charmed by Harry, who seemingly spotted something in her that she hadn't realised was there herself: kindness. Her mother also took an interest in the family and offered to take Harry out from time to time, days he thoroughly enjoyed when he was well.

One evening, when she had come home from Kelly's, Camilla hatched a plan. She rang her father. "Daddy I want a favour, a big favour". "Not more money?" he replied somewhat tetchily. "No, not at all; in fact you can stop my allowance altogether if you wish. Anyway, what's the matter?" Her father proceeded to tell her that his partner had upped and left him the week before. She'd got fed up with him having to go to work and not including her in his social life. He was sad but also quite relieved, as they hadn't been getting on for a long time, and he still felt guilty about leaving his wife and Camilla, whom he was expecting to say "serves you right". On the contrary, however, her tone was quite the opposite. "Never mind, Dad, you've still got us", and he couldn't believe the genuine concern in his daughter's voice. "Look," she said, "this is a bit of a long shot, but listen". Her father was in fact a barrister in

London who also owned properties there and near where they lived in Cumbria. He was a very wealthy man and an accomplished professional. Camilla told him the story of Kelly's family and how her Dad had not been paid huge sums of money he was owed. She thought that maybe he could help get it back for them. "That's a tall order," he said, "do they know you've spoken to me?" "No, not at all; Kelly would kill me." It was then arranged that David, her father could come up for the weekend and meet Harry and Kelly's family as if by accident and see if he could fall into conversation with Tom, Kelly's Dad, and offer to help him. This was duly done without Kelly suspecting a thing. Camilla's parents came to collect her and as Kelly's Dad was at home, they were invited in for a drink. Slowly the story of what had happened to them emerged and David could recognise the injustice of it. He went outside with Tom and quietly offered to help, for Harry's sake. "I'm not sure if it will do any good, but we could at least try," he said, and was surprised when Tom, a proud man, agreed. He had still been looking for work in Liverpool and found only one or two temporary jobs, not enough to keep his family for long. David told his daughter on the way home and swore her to secrecy; her mother seemed to be interested to help also. Clearly Harry had got to these people as well, Camilla thought.

Some weeks passed by. The girls worked hard together and formed a strong and caring friendship. Camilla could not believe what had happened to her. For the first time in her life, she actually felt happy. The school was in almost permanent shock. How could such a bully be completely transformed like this? One Friday evening, Camilla's father came to pick her up unexpectedly. He came in, smiling, and handed an envelope to Tom, who had just arrived back from Liverpool. "Well, Tom, we've managed to get some of what you are owed back. Let's just say I used my persuasive legal powers and called in a few favours from friends." When Tom opened the envelope, his face went white with shock. Inside it was a cheque for one hundred and eighty five thousand pounds! His wife took it from him and burst into tears, then Kelly did, then Camilla then Harry. They were jumping up and down and hugging each other with sheer delight, and kissing David for his goodness. Harry smiled the biggest smile of his life. Then David said, "Look Tom, I hope you don't mind", but I've got a few businesses up here but I'm too tied up in London to look after them. You've run your own business and seem a fairly trustworthy chap. Do you think you'd mind being a sort of business partner and running them for me? One of them is actually a kitchen business and that's right up your street. Oh, and there are a few houses as well to keep an eye on. I'm putting one up for sale and you might consider buying it – it's on the market for £185,000, but I'd be happy to take much less, if I sold it to you. It's got a lot of potential and there's enough room to make a bedroom and wet room downstairs for Harry."

Kelly's parents were gobsmacked, absolutely gobsmacked. Tom said, "David, I really do not know what to say" "I hope you'll say, 'yes', said David. "Yes, yes of course, absolutely," Tom replied and they shook hands on it. "That's settled then," said David, "now Camilla, I need to take you home; I've got a date tonight". "A date?" asked Camilla, quietly thinking to herself, 'here we go again', but she needn't have worried. "With your mother, actually" her father replied. "Well, we've started talking again and coming here to meet Harry has made us

rethink a lot of things and rekindled our friendship. I don't know what will happen, but your mother is being much nicer to me than she's been for years and seems to have changed dramatically as a person. She's really rather good to know now." "And so are you, Dad," said Camilla, taking his arm. Kelly sensed there might be something in the air and said quickly, "look, Camilla, why don't you stay here with us and you won't have to be on your own at home while the 'love-birds' are out". "Love-birds?" said David, going red with embarrassment. "Oh whatever, you know," said Kelly, and he didn't try to argue with her. Harry tapped out 'please stay' and it was settled.

The years ahead were not easy for them. Harry's condition was up and down, Kelly became a nurse, and Camilla followed her, Tom was making a success of the business and David moved in again with Camilla's mother. There was a lot of forgiving and healing to be done on all sides, but time can change a lot of things. So here is a story of how a little boy could change hearts and minds without saying a single word, and help people previously apart from each other to come together in love and friendship and find thereby what is really important in life for all of us. Families had become families again, love lost was found and Harry just smiled.

Appendix 2 – The Hinckley group used the following between Sessions 4 and 5:

Pigs and the Chinese New Year

The Hinckley group created their own 'interlude' thus:

We started with Chinese New Year and talked about the Chinese Year of the Goat/Sheep. We talked about all the other animals in the Chinese Calendar, all twelve of them, about the communication of animals. We finished with the pig. Laura was asked if she knew any jokes about a pig. Each of us who knew a joke about a pig, told it to the group, here are a few:-

Q: What do you call a pig thief? A; A hamburglar.

Q: How do pigs write top secret messages? A: With invisible oink!

Q: What is a pig's favorite color? A: Mahogany!

Yesterday a pig invited me to see his new home. Actually it was quite stylish.

Q: Who is the smartest pig in the world? A: Ein- swine

Q: How do you take a sick pig to the hospital? A: In an hambulance!

Q: What do you call a pig that drives recklessly? A: A road hog.

Q: What do you call a pig with laryngitis? A: Disgruntled.

Q: What do pigs get when they're ill? A: Oinkment!

Q: What do you call a pig that does karate? A: Porkchop!

Q. What do you call the story of The Three Little Pigs? A: A pig tail!

Q: Why did the farmer call his pig ink? A: Because it always ran out of the pen!

Some of our friends read out the Shaggy dog stories below:-

Religious Cowboy

The devout cowboy lost his favourite Bible while he was mending fences out on the range. Three weeks later, a pig walked up to him carrying the Bible in its mouth. The cowboy couldn't believe his eyes. He took the precious book out of the pig's mouth, raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "It's a miracle!" "Not really," said the pig. "Your name is written inside the cover."

Night of Drinking

A man and his pet pig walk into a bar. It's about 5pm, but they're ready for a good night of drinking. They start off slowly, watching TV, drinking beer, eating peanuts. As the night goes on they move to mixed drinks, and then shooters, one after the other. Finally, the bartender says: "Last call." So, the man says, "One more for me... and one more for my pig." The bartender sets them up and they shoot them back. Suddenly, the pig falls over dead. The man

throws some money on the bar, puts on his coat and starts to leave. The bartender, yells: "Hey buddy, you can't just leave that lyin' there." To which the man replies: "That's not a lion, that's a pig."

Cold Winter

In the winter a man says to his wife: "Should we get the pig inside, it is freezing out there." "But it stinks", says the wife to which the husband replies: "He will get used to it!"

Front Seat

A policeman in the big city stops a man in a car with a pig in the front seat. "What are you doing with that pig?" He exclaimed, "You should take it to the zoo." The following week, the same policeman sees the same man with the pig again in the front seat, with both of them wearing sunglasses. The policeman pulls him over. "I thought you were going to take that pig to the zoo!" The man replied, "I did. We had such a good time we are going to the beach this weekend!"

*Marina showed picture of the pig and asked how do pigs get their message across or communicate with each other. She gave us examples by making pig sounds. She gave an example of what each one **could** mean. "Oink" **could** mean contented and happiness, calling for their young. "Grunts" **could** mean disgruntled, hungry, looking for attention. "Squeals" could mean worried, unhappy and frightened. These are only guesses but like us they communicate with distinct sounds .*

Facts about pigs

- Pigs are extraordinarily intelligent. They are curious and insightful animals who are widely accepted as being smarter than young children of at least 3 years of age, dogs, and even some primates.
- Pigs are extremely social animals. They form close bonds with other individuals and love close contact and lying down together.
- Pigs are very clean, keeping their toilet area far away from where they lie down and eat. Even newborn piglets will leave the nest to go to the toilet within hours of birth.
- Pigs are very peaceful animals, rarely showing aggression. The exception, as with many animals, is when a mother (sow) with her young offspring is provoked or threatened.
- Pigs have a tremendous sense of smell. The large round disk of cartilage at the tip of the snout is connected to muscle that gives it extra flexibility and strength for rooting in the ground.
- There are numerous stories of pigs that have saved the lives of humans. For example, a pet pig called Pru pulled her owner out of a muddy bog, and another, Priscilla, saved a young boy from drowning.
- The pig is the last of the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac. The Pig is seen to represent, fortune, honesty, happiness and virility.

"The Pig" by Roald Dahl

In England once there lived a big
And wonderfully clever pig.
To everybody it was plain
That Piggy had a massive brain.

He worked out sums inside his head,
There was no book he hadn't read.
He knew what made an airplane fly,
He knew how engines worked and why.
He knew all this, but in the end
One question drove him round the bend:
He simply couldn't puzzle out
What LIFE was really all about.
What was the reason for his birth?
Why was he placed upon this earth?
His giant brain went round and round.
Alas, no answer could be found.
Till suddenly one wondrous night.
All in a flash he saw the light.
He jumped up like a ballet dancer
And yelled, 'By gum, I've got the answer! '
'They want my bacon slice by slice
'To sell at a tremendous price!
'They want my tender juicy chops
'To put in all the butcher's shops!
'They want my pork to make a roast
'And that's the part that'll cost the most!

'They want my sausages in strings!
'They even want my chitterlings!
'The butcher's shop! The carving knife!
'That is the reason for my life! '
Such thoughts as these are not designed
To give a pig great piece of mind.
Next morning, in comes Farmer Bland,
A pail of pigswill in his hand,
And piggy with a mighty roar,
Bashes the farmer to the floor...
Now comes the rather grisly bit
So let's not make too much of it,
Except that you must understand
That Piggy did eat Farmer Bland,
He ate him up from head to toe,
Chewing the pieces nice and slow.
It took an hour to reach the feet,
Because there was so much to eat,
And when he finished, Pig, of course,
Felt absolutely no remorse.
Slowly he scratched his brainy head
And with a little smile he said,
'I had a fairly powerful hunch
'That he might have me for his lunch.
'And so, because I feared the worst,
'I thought I'd better eat him first.'

The group then watched the DVD of the 2008 production “Pigs Might Fly”, a play written by Fr. Frank in memory of Mary Forryan, and we had a break half way through.

During the break everyone was asking what was the animal for the year they were born.

We looked up the year and told them the animal. This must be done as a little bit of fun. The system of the animal zodiac offers nothing more than general characteristics shared by people born under a specific sign. In this guide, we discuss (if asked) the aspects of each of the appropriate animal in the Chinese Zodiac.

Examples Below

The Industrious Rat

Everyone loves a rat. Charming, social, and quick-witted, those born during a rat year are generally popular people. Always on the move, rats find safety in numbers, giving credence to the phrases “the rat race” and “the rat pack.” Rats also have good business acumen. Self-motivated, detail-oriented, hard-working, and overambitious, rats are able to accumulate wealth effortlessly. Their thrifty nature and shrewdness pays off during a recession. If you have a rat boss—beware! You’ll have to do a lot of negotiating to make this rat part with his reserves. Rat women make excellent wives and mothers. Budgeting, bargaining, delegating duties, and organising hoards of stuff are her best qualities.

The Methodical Ox

The ox person succeeds by his own merits. Hard working, logical, meticulous, and tenacious, the ox can be trusted to get the job done. By nature, he is methodical, sticking to routines and tradition. It’s almost impossible to get the ox to budge. At home, the ox man is the disciplinarian, the decision maker, and the rule setter. Disobeying an ox is cause for a rampage. Stay clear if he charges you! But he is an excellent provider, and his family will never do without. An ox wife excels on the job and in her domestic duties. The bills are paid; the check book is balanced; the dinner is made; the shirts are ironed; and the children well looked after and tucked in. Although the ox man lacks a sense of humour. The ox mans affairs are governed by his head rather than his heart, unlike the Female. He/she are intensely loyal creature.

The Unpredictable Tiger

Tigers are romantic, charismatic, and independent. They’re also fiercely adventurous, moody, impulsive, and reckless. An ardent optimist, tigers live life to the fullest and on their terms! Although he gives 110 percent to whatever catches his attention at that moment, he is notoriously unreliable. The tiger man is brash, rash, and extremely possessive. If he sees you with his lady, look out. The tiger woman is vain and indecisive. She is playful with her children, but enforces good behaviour. In all, tigers are unpredictable creatures.

The Lucky Rabbit

Rabbits are affable, even-tempered, and diplomatic. Known for their discriminating taste, rabbits are refined, cultured, and a bit snobbish! They thrive on fine wine, gourmet food, designer clothes, and stimulating conversation. In business, a rabbit is a deft negotiator. His good judgment, sound advice, and graciousness will move him up the career track—fast. Because he has few enemies, he rarely gets into trouble. Rabbits live by the Golden Rule and wouldn’t think of burning a bridge. Lady rabbits are kind, considerate, and caring, but superficial.

The Dynamic Dragon

Among the 12 animals, dragons are the most fortunate. In fact, they're downright lucky! They're energetic, self-assured, grandiose, and egocentric. Dragons are the doers of the world. They don't sit around waiting for things to happen; they make them happen. You can always count on the no-nonsense dragon to take charge—and take risks. Their fiery enthusiasm and forceful nature rule. Dragons want things done their way. They demand perfection from themselves and from others. Even though the dragon must have the last word, he is quick to forgive. Holding grudges will slow him down. Although the dragon's magnanimous spirit draws a crowd, he has few close friends.

The Wise Snake

Those born under the sign of the snake are governed by their innate wisdom and intuition. Snake people think a lot. They mull things over before forming an opinion. They're intensely philosophical and make excellent listeners. Snake people are fast learners and will never make the same mistake twice. Highly skeptical and secretive creatures, snakes prefer to keep matters to themselves. They cherish their privacy, concealing their innermost wants. Cross a snake, and you can be sure he'll strike at you. Most of the world's beautiful and powerful people are snakes.

The Independent Horse

A horse person loves freedom. Freedom to keep his own hours. Freedom from routine. Freedom from anyone intending to rope him in. So if you're married to a horse, give him space, or he'll bolt. Incredibly industrious and self-reliant, horses love a challenge. Horses tend to be show-offs and self-centred, and will compliment to get a compliment. Finances are never an issue. Horses are hard-working and creative. Also, they are very headstrong, quick-minded, and don't tolerate those who are not "up to speed." Able to do 10 things at once, the horse abhors idleness. Horses are poor savers, thinking of the now and not the future.

The Sensitive Sheep/Goat/Ram

Ultra-sensitive, altruistic, compliant, sincere, gentle: This is a sheep/Goat/Ram. Although they make excellent sounding boards, don't expect the sheep to help you solve your dilemma. They're there to listen only! Prone to stress and depression, sheep/Goat/Ram prefer tranquil environments. At their worst, sheep can be pessimistic, withdrawn, and lazy. Any kind of criticism will cause them to brood for days. In the end, their self-pity will give rise to encouragement and support from friends and colleagues. Don't let a sheep/Goat/Ram manage your finances. They overspend what they have due to their generous nature. Sheep/Goat/Ram individuals follow the crowd and seldom lead.

The Mischievous Monkey

Insatiably curious, monkeys will try anything once. Eager to learn new skills, a monkey will enthusiastically perform it over and over until he's mastered it. This gives credence to the phrase, "Monkey see, monkey do." Also, monkeys are intensely competitive. They make it their mission to do things better than anyone else. Failure is not in the monkey's vocabulary. Extremely intelligent, clever, and innovative, the monkey person will excel in any field. He truly believes he is "the top banana."

The Meticulous Rooster

Cocky and pretentious, the rooster loves to strut his stuff, showing off his fine feathers. Roosters are proud creatures. Their world is black and white, void of grey. Brutally honest, forthright, and candid; ask a rooster his opinion, and he'll tell you exactly what he thinks. When he wants your opinion, he'll give it to you! He is definitely not a diplomat. If the

rooster could learn to sweeten his criticism, he'd be much better off. On the positive side, roosters are detail-oriented and perfectionists. Give a rooster your money, and he will account for every penny. Also, roosters are extremely focused. Their organisational skills are superlative.

The Devoted Dog

A dog is truly a person's best friend. Compatible, compromising, loyal, and unprejudiced, dogs are there when you need them. The dog person is trustworthy and dutiful, making an excellent (albeit reluctant) leader. Contrary to what you may think, dogs form friendships slowly. First, they must check you out, watch, and wait. You must win their affection. For the most part, dogs are humble animals, caring little about money. Although they can lavish you with unconditional devotion and love, when provoked. Of all the signs in the Chinese Zodiac, the dog is the most likeable.

The Nurturing Pig

Bottom line, pigs are the nicest people on the planet. With hearts of gold, they are honest, patient, and will take every measure to ensure your safety and comfort. A pig will remain your friend for life. But, pigs are often taken for granted. Only when they're not around do you realise how dependent you are on them. Naturally naive, pigs can be gullible, falling prey to charlatans and swindlers. In all, pigs of both genders are selfless, devoted, and loving. They just can't say "no." Because of their overzealous generosity, the pig person has little money. Nevertheless, he has enough, giving credence to the phrase, "the more you give, the more you shall receive."

Our conclusion to the evening was that even animals can give 'messages' to us and to each other!