

**Introduction**

This year has been set aside by Pope Benedict as a Year of Faith. But what is a ‘Year of Faith’ and what is it for? It is a time when we think about what we really believe, whom we believe in and what that might mean for us. To believe in a person is to trust them, to feel safe in their company and know they are telling you the truth; to want to give yourself to them and be with them always. Jesus Christ asked his followers – “do you believe in me?” Jesus asks us today the same question, “do you believe in me?” Lots of people seem to think that believing in anyone is a silly and deluded way to spend your life. How could anyone with any sense possibly think there is a God? What do we need a ‘God’ for anyway? If this ‘God’ is so good and loving why are there so many wars and so much fighting between people? Why are they so cruel to each other and why doesn’t he stop them? Why is there so much poverty in the world? Why do awful things happen to good people? And why does this ‘God’ not do what I ask him to do for me? How can you pray to someone who’s not there in the first place? So isn’t all this ‘faith business’ just one big fairy story?

There have always been people who didn’t really believe in God or who would only believe in him if he did things for them. When Jesus was on the cross, one of the thieves next to him asked, “If you are the Son of God, save yourself and us as well.” St Thomas didn’t believe the other disciples when they said they had seen the risen Jesus. “Unless I can see the marks made by the nails,” he said, “and put my finger into the holes that they made, I refuse to believe.” So what would have happened if there was no faith? If there was no faith, there would have been no scriptures or sacred writings. St Luke said: “Seeing that many others have undertaken to tell the story of all that has taken place among us exactly as it has been told by those who were actually there, I, also have decided to write and ordered account for you so that you can see how well founded is the teaching that you have received.” St John said: “these events are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing this you may have life through his name.”

If there was no faith, there would have been no church or community of believers for thousands of years before Jesus was born and for two thousand years since. If there was no faith, there would be no history since faith and the history of civilisation are bound together. If there was no faith there would be no cathedrals built to the glory of God. If there was no faith there would be no sacred music like Handel’s “Messiah” or Mozart’s “Requiem”. If there was no faith there would be no works of art or poetry in which people tried to express what God was like and give him honour. If there was no faith there would be no saints, no Christian tradition. If there was no faith there would be no people asking where they had come from or where they were going to in their lives. If there was no faith there would be no men and women, countless souls, who lived through the centuries doing good for others with no thought for themselves. If there were no faith, there would be no life for us or any purpose in our living. If there were no faith, there would be no Holy Mass, no forgiveness, no joy and happiness for us when we discovered the truth of living – give away your life so that you may find it.

2)

St. Peter said: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.” And that is what we are going to think about in this coming year. What do we mean when we say, “I believe”? How might this change our lives and help us to see and do things differently? And can we, in the midst of a world that has rejected him, still be followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, and live in his way?

Faith is for people; it is something that people do; it makes a difference to how they live their lives. It means that they no longer live for themselves but for Jesus and his way. Jesus is calling each of us to live for him to believe in him, but it is not easy. Sometimes we have to change our way of living and that is not easy either. Particularly if our friends make fun of us or go away from us. Or if we have to really suffer. But people have done this before us and still do today - some we know and countless others we don't know.

Since faith is for people, this is where we have decided to start, with every individual in each of our groups. For our first three sessions we will compile a ‘scrapbook’ for each person, with photos of them and their families, photos at club nights, on holidays and in church. This will be called “My Faith Story” (see below). This will hopefully prove to be a lot of fun, cutting and pasting, searching through old archive group photographs and seeing how people have changed over the years, as well as discovering on the one-to-one ‘interview’ things about each other, and possibly sharing secrets or worries that no one else knew they had. In later sessions, group leaders will be able to download text from this master, photocopy them and then give them to group members for inclusion in their books as appropriate. For session 4, we will play a ‘true and false’ game, trying to examine in a lively and colourful way what ‘believing’ someone means – ie. are they telling the truth or not; can we be sure of them; how do we know?

3)

## **My Faith Story**

A picture of me



**My name is**

**My birthday is on**

**I live at**

**Names of my Mum, Dad, Sisters or Brothers.**

**4)**

**Mum's Name**

**Dad's Name**

**Sister/Sister's Name(s)**

**Brother/Brother's Name(s)**

**Names of anyone else in your family.**

**Names of people close to me**

**My Friends' names**

**Do you have a pet if so what?**



**I enjoy going to:**

**5)**

**The reason why I come to the .....Club is because:**

**My favourite activity is:**

**Other activities I enjoy are:**

**I like it when**

**6)**

**I get upset when**

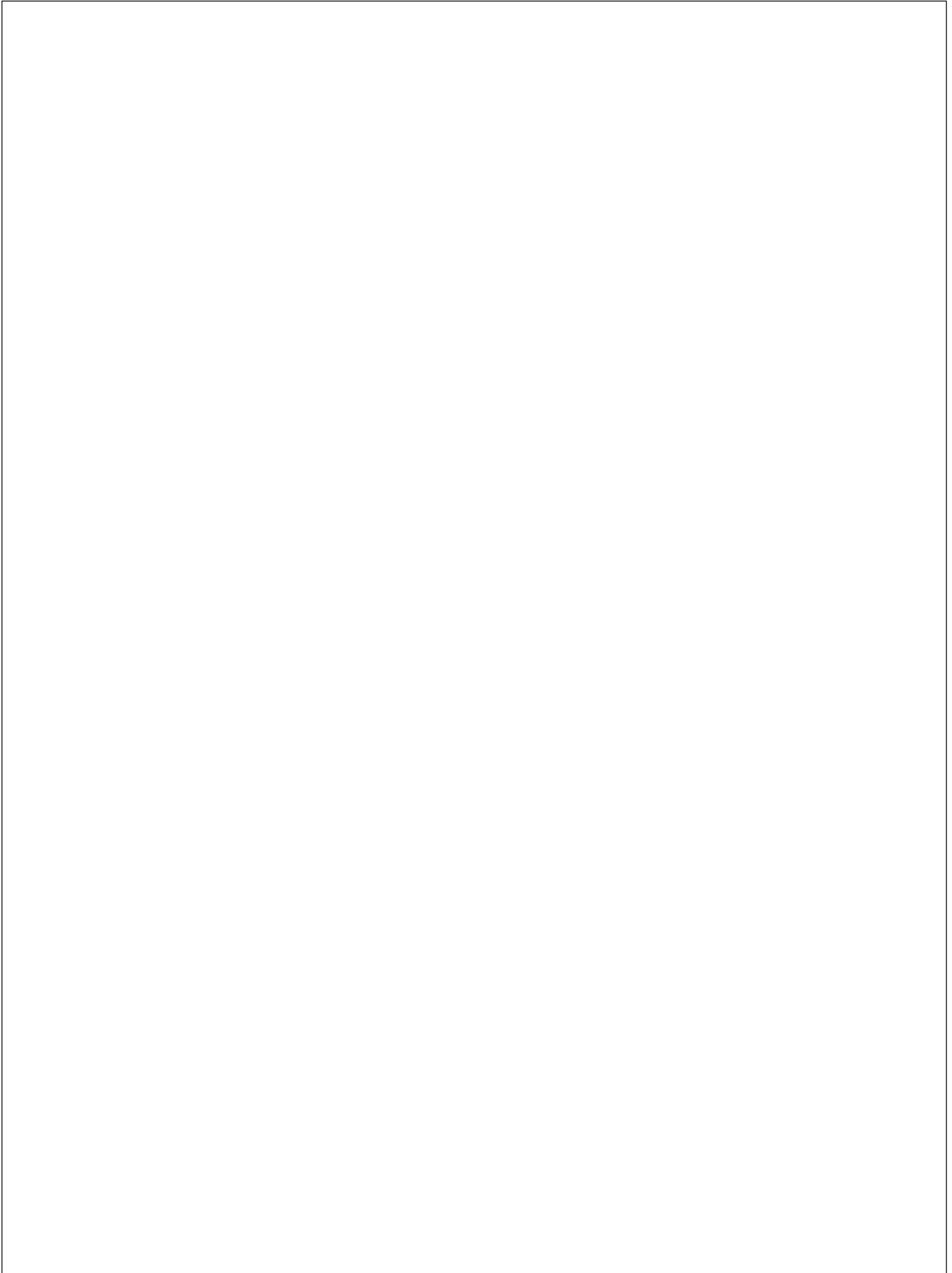
**I need support when**

**My favourite food is**

**My favourite drink is**

**Here are some photos of me at the club**

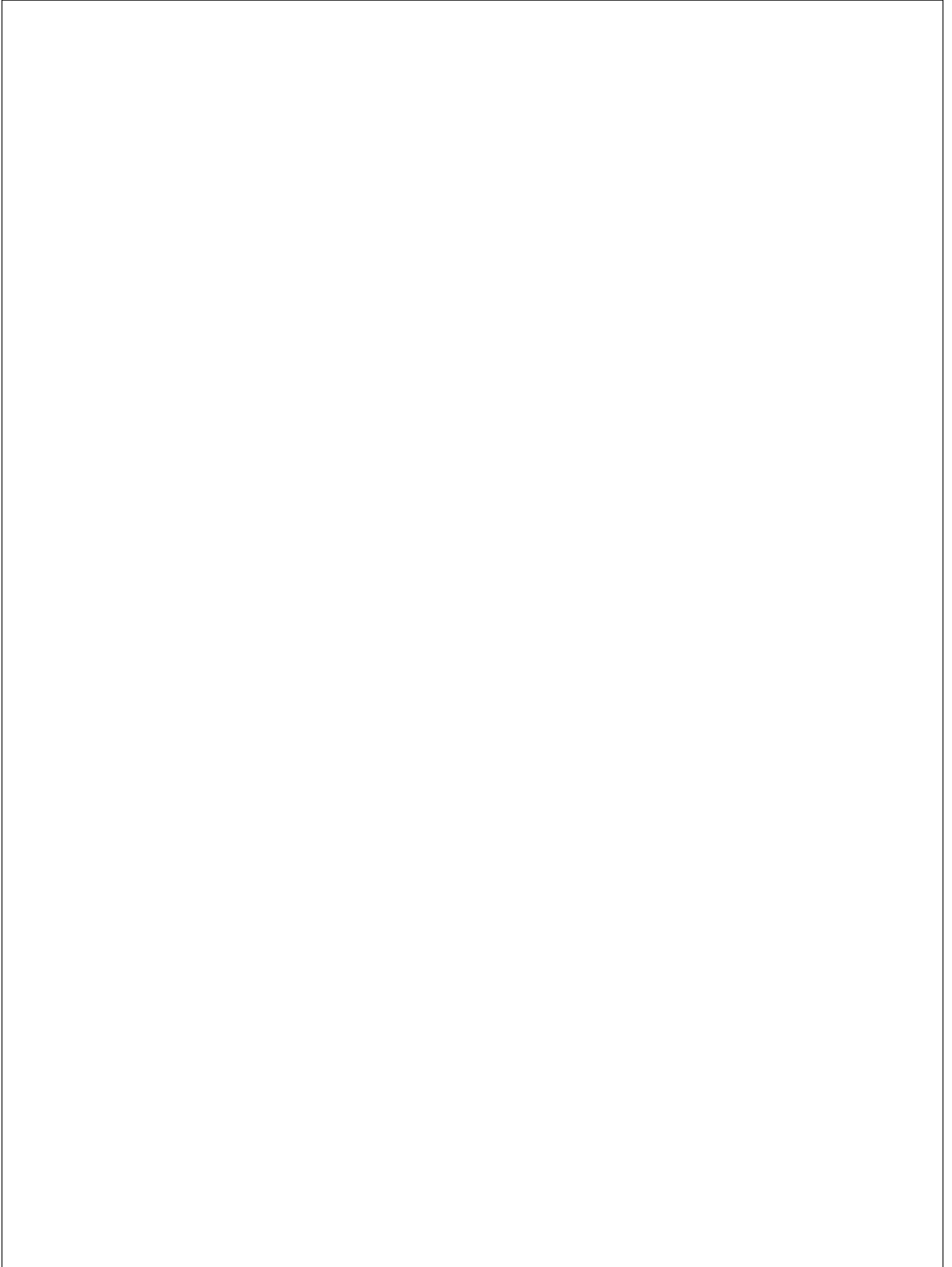
**7)**





**Here are some photos of me on holiday or day trips**

**8)**



**This is my palm print**

**9)**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a palm print. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the vertical space below the header.

**I belong to / am a friend of ..... church**

**Our club is part of SPANNED**

**In SPANNED we learn about God and Jesus**

**We take part in Mass and other services with our club and friends from other groups**

**We go to different places each year to meet up like Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Hinckley, Loughborough, Scunthorpe and Llandudno**

**Some groups go on pilgrimage to Lourdes**

**We tell people the Good News about Jesus in words, music, mime and songs**

**We listen to stories about Jesus from the Bible**

**We tell them that Jesus is close to them always and try to be close to him**

**We do projects about God and his love each year like: “Live Simply”; “Home is a Holy Place”; “The Story” and “Have I got ‘Good News for you?’”**

**This project is for a special year called the “Year of Faith”**

**When we say we ‘believe’ in Jesus, that means we have ‘faith’**

**The group of people who have faith in Jesus is called the “Church”**

**We will learn about people who had faith in God in the past as well as today – some from the Bible and some from history**

**Sometimes it is difficult to have faith. to believe in God whom we cannot see**

**We have heard about him from others – our families, friends and the Church**

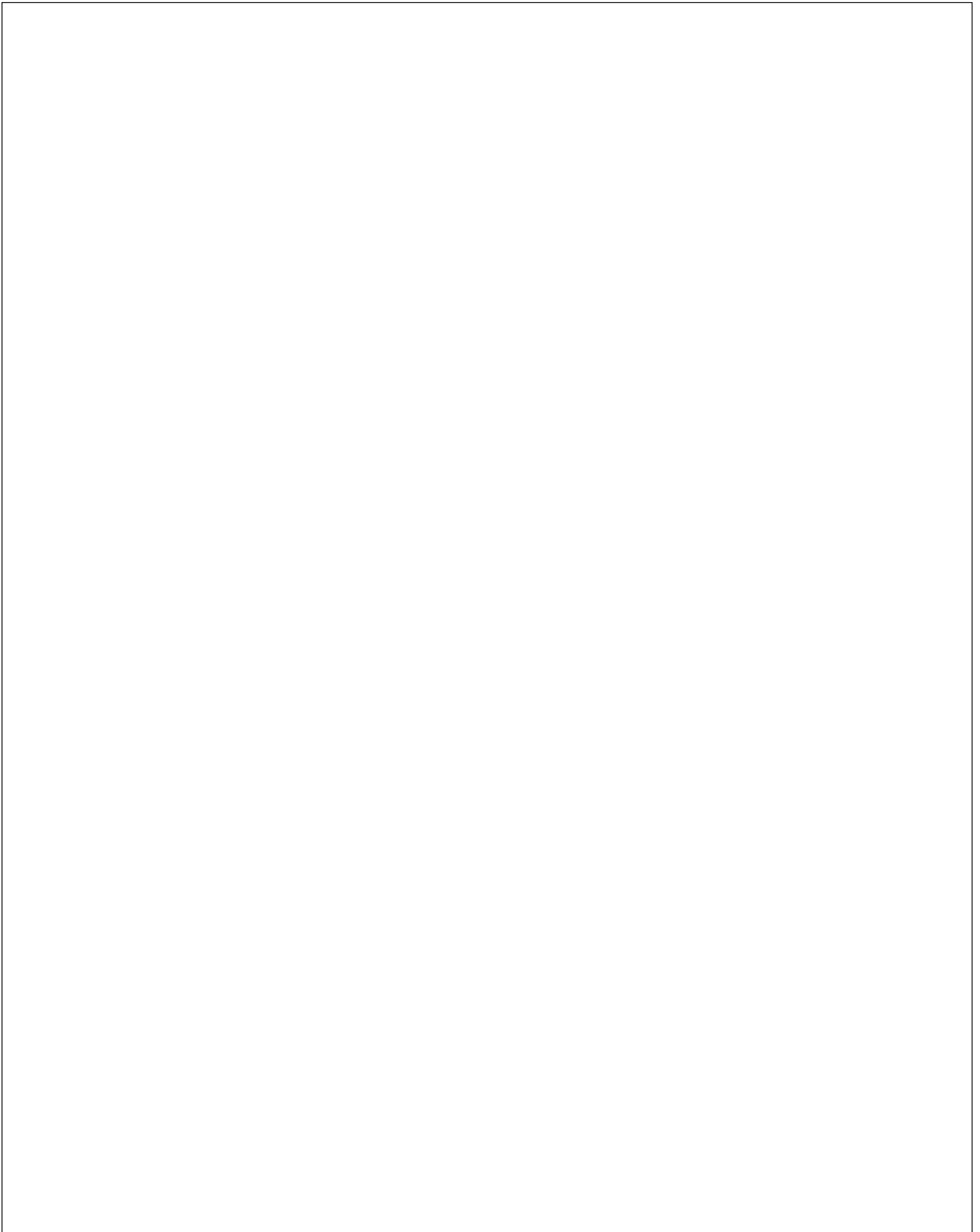
**Some people forget about God and all they have been told about him and his love**

**We will think about what it means for me to have faith in God, to ‘believe’ in him**

**We will try to see how we need to change our lives if we say we believe in him, even though sometimes that is difficult**

**We will go out with our groups and SPANNED to show people what God is like and what it does for us when we believe in him**

Here are some photos of me in church with my SPANNED friends



## Session 4 The True and False game – do you believe me?

Revolving flash cards with “true” and “false” written on them are made and given to a small number of people on a ‘panel’, or maybe two teams. Statements are read out to them which they have to say are true or false by lifting up the cards. This game could go on for some time.

True and false stories – ask one or two ‘raconteurs’ to make up stories, some of which have to be true and some false. “Would you ‘Adam and Eve’ it?”

Stuart Glasgow is very quiet	TRUE OR FALSE?
Kenny Steele writes short letters	TRUE OR FALSE?
Audrey Hepburn was born in Belgium	TRUE OR FALSE?
The Tuesday Club send bottle tops to France	TRUE OR FALSE?
Father Frank is very thin	TRUE OR FALSE?
Stephen Peat has a girlfriend in Llandudno	TRUE OR FALSE?
Stephen Peat has a girlfriend everywhere	TRUE OR FALSE?
Tanya Arnold spent a lot more time in Lourdes last year than she had bargained for	TRUE OR FALSE?
Ann Phillips takes wonderful photos	TRUE OR FALSE?
Genny Hickey is very tall	TRUE OR FALSE?
It’s always sunny in Scunny	TRUE OR FALSE?

So how do we know what is true or false? And who can we believe? Sometimes we can see for ourselves or hear for ourselves; sometimes other people who have seen for themselves tell us and we trust them. Tell the funny (and true!) story of the man who was asked by a policeman to ‘blow into this bag’, knowing he had had far too much to drink already!

Identify the differences between ‘do you believe me?’ and ‘do you believe in me?’, which is what Jesus asked his followers. Have a discussion on what ‘believing’ means for each person and then write it up in their scrapbooks.

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St. Peter said: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." And that is what we are going to think about in this coming year. What do we mean when we say, "I believe"? How might this change our lives and help us to see and do things differently? And can we, in the midst of a world that has rejected him, still be followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, and live in his way?

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### **Interlude A Maundy Thursday in Hinckley**

On Maundy Thursday evening the Hinckley Sunshine Club took a full part in the liturgy – some having their feet washed, others bringing up the gits at the offertory and others helping to strip the altar at the end of Mass. On Friday, many members took part in the Churches Together event in the town centre

During Easter week, members from 5 of our groups spent a week at the Loreto Conference Centre in Llandudno for the 33<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year. At Mass each evening, we followed the events that took place in the first Easter week, and reflected on how Jesus appeared to his friends in various places and ways and how they reacted to him – Mary Magdalen thought he was the gardener, Thomas refused to believe what the others had told him until he could see for himself, the two disciples on the Emmaus road only recognised him when he broke the bread in their company. We used these reading to meditate on faith and what it means and thought in particular of those people who had been with us over the years but who had now gone to the Lord in heaven. We are not meant to be here forever but with him and our faith tells us that their dying is not the end of their story. On this particular week, the weather was bright and cold and we could also see some truly spectacular views of mountains and lakes, thereby recognising the hand of God at work in creating them all for us. The whole week – views, prayers, company and community of friends – taught us so much about our faith and fitted perfectly into the work we have been doing so far.

### **Session 5 Believing in God**

Tell or mime some stories from the Old Testament – eg. Noah, Abraham, Samuel, David – and ask what did it mean for them to believe in God.

Here are some stories about people from the Bible and how they believed in God:

**Noah:** It wasn't long after God made the man and his wife and put them into a beautiful garden that things started to go wrong. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbade them to, and then found out what good and evil were – living in God's way or in ours. They had two children and one, Cain, murdered the other, Abel, because he was jealous of him. So God began to think that maybe making a world was not such a good idea after all. And for the next hundred years or so, he had no reason to change his mind. He was deeply hurt and sorry that he had ever made the human race. "I will end the whole dreadful business, men Animals, reptiles, wild birds, everything," he said, "I'm sorry I ever began it". One man, however, was different from the others – Noah.

*This piece could be mimed to the text or to the song: "Rise and shine, give God the glory, glory"*

God thought well of him as he was trying to live in God's way. God told him to build a ship on dry land, which he managed to do and then God told him to take his family on to it, and pairs of animals as well, one male and one female. "You're the only good man I can find", God said, "and next week I am going to send down rain on the earth. It will rain and rain for a very long time and destroy all living things everywhere." Noah again obeyed. At the end of the week, down came the rain and God shut Noah and his family safe and sound up in the ship. It rained for a very long time before it stopped and there was nothing left on the earth. Eventually, the rain stopped and Noah opened the hatch to see the waters everywhere.

Eventually, after another long time, the waters subsided and the land dried out. Noah got off the ship and made a special prayer of thanks to God, who told him, "I will never again drown the world because of what people have done, even if they disobey me again". God's promise to Noah was called a covenant.

**Abraham:** Of course we know that human nature being what it is, things did not get better but worse. God's people continually turned away from him and did things he didn't like, so he was getting rather short of friends. He watched and he waited for someone really special to turn up and it took about 400 years, because God wanted to start a new kind of people. You would think that he would choose someone young to start a new people, but no, he chose a middle aged man who had lived in large cities all his life and had a good looking wife but no children. He had a good business a fine home and many servants, and his name was Abraham. God spoke to him – he was his friend after all – and told him to leave all his home and beautiful things and that he would be the father of a great nation. Abraham's wife, Sarah, who was now getting older and past the time when she might have children, just laughed at her husband when he told her, but Abraham believed God and trusted in him, so he set off. It was a long and difficult journey that took them through the desert, into Egypt and out of it, and there were many problems on the way with his family, because Abraham did not know yet where God meant him to be. Eventually, when they got to the Jordan valley, God told him that this land would be his and that he would have thousands of descendants. And sure enough, even though by now both Abraham and Sarah were old, they had a son called Isaac. God told Abraham that he was going to destroy the cities of people who had turned against him, but his friend persuaded him to relent. As years went on, God was to test the faith and friendship of his friend in a big way. He told him to take his son off into the mountains, to build an altar with some wood and to offer his son as a sacrifice to God as they used to do with animals. So Abraham took his son with him and built the altar. He lay his son, his only son on the altar and was about to kill him with a knife when God stopped his hand and said to him: "Now I know for sure that you believe in me and trust me; you did not refuse your only son to me". Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a bush, and he sacrificed the animal to God's place of his son. God rewarded Abraham for his faith and made him the father of a great nation – the people of Israel.

**Samuel** – Samuel was a young man destined for greatness as one of God's chosen instruments. He lived in the temple with the old priest Eli after his mother, Hannah, who had prayed and waited for years for a child, dedicated him to the Lord's service as soon as he was old enough as she had promised him to God. One night when Samuel went to bed, he heard a voice, "Samuel, Samuel". He went to find Eli and said to him, "here I am, since you called me". Eli said, "I did not call you my son. Go back and lie down." He went back to bed and heard the voice calling again, "Samuel, Samuel". He went again to Eli, who told him, "I did not call you my son. Go back and lie down." When he heard the voice a third time he went again to Eli, who realised that in fact it was God who was calling him and told him, "If you hear the voice again, just say, 'here I am, Lord, your servant is listening.'" Samuel went back



to bed and later on he heard the voice calling him again, “Samuel, Samuel”, and he replied, “Here I am, Lord, your servant is listening.”

**David** – David was the greatest of the kings of Israel and yet he was the youngest of the sons of Jesse. No one thought that this shepherd boy could possibly be a king, but God spotted his potential. At that time, the people of Israel were being attacked and devastated by some horrible people called Philistines, who had a giant of aman called Goliath as their great champion. He was so big and strong that everyone was frightened of him and he had slaughtered the best soldiers of the Israelite army. David came out of the crowd and challenged him to a fight, and he laughed at him. “Is this the best you can do, to send an unarmed boy up against me”. But David told him, “I mean to fight you and kill you by cutting off your head.” As Goliath approached him, David bent down and picked up a stone. He put it into his sling and swung it at Goliath. The stone pierced his forehead and he fell down to the ground. David came up to him, drew his giant sword and cut off his head. Thus David established himself as the great champion and king of the people of Israel.

What does it mean for us to believe in God? How can we know what it is if we do not know what God is like? So how can we know what God is like? We listen to those who have seen and heard for themselves.

### **Liturgy 1 – “The Year of Faith” – Mickleover, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

**Entry Hymn** Though the mountains may fall

**Introduction** *Representatives from all groups*

*Derby* Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Mass. This year, our work together in SPANNED has been about the “Year of Faith”. But what is a ‘Year of Faith’ and what is it for? It is a time when we think about what we really believe, whom we believe in and what that might mean for us. Here are some examples of our ‘true’ and ‘false’ game for you to join in with

*The ‘personalities’ involved come forward and group members with cards bearing the words “TRUE” and “FALSE”. Suitable reaction takes place after each statement*

Stuart Glasgow is very quiet TRUE OR FALSE?

*Someone comes and puts their hand over his mouth*

Kenny Steele writes short letters TRUE OR FALSE?

*Kenny opens up a very long piece of computer paper*

Audrey Hepburn was born in Belgium TRUE OR FALSE?

*Photo of Audrey Hepburn is held up*

The Tuesday Club send bottle tops to France TRUE OR FALSE?

*A bag is brought in after the TRUE cards are held up*

Father Frank is very thin TRUE OR FALSE? *TRUE cards are held up and then the group look at Fr.Frank and turn them round*

- Stephen Peat has a girlfriend in Llandudno TRUE OR FALSE?  
*Photo of Stephen and Lyndsey is held up*
- Stephen Peat has a girlfriend everywhere TRUE OR FALSE? *Lots of 'pretend' photos are produced*
- Tanya Arnold spent a lot more time in Lourdes last year than she bargained for TRUE OR FALSE? *The Jumbulance leaders come out and give her a hug*
- Ann Phillips takes wonderful photos TRUE OR FALSE?  
*Ann's camera is produced and she takes a photo of everyone*
- Genny Hickey is very tall TRUE OR FALSE?  
*Two people stand either side of Genny and pretend to look up and then look down at her*
- It's always sunny in Scunny TRUE OR FALSE?  
*Three people from Scunthorpe put up umbrellas at the appropriate moment*

### *Scunthorpe Group*

Narrator Whatever we say, there will always be someone who doesn't or won't believe us:

*A group of people say: "Prove it" and repeat it after every sentence*

They won't believe us unless we can show them

They refuse to believe unless they can be absolutely convinced

They won't accept what they cannot prove

In the Bible there was a person like that called Thomas

But more of him later

*Leicester* To believe in a person is to trust them, to feel safe in their company and know they are telling you the truth; to want to give yourself to them and be with them always. Jesus Christ asked his followers – “do you believe in me?” Jesus asks us today the same question, “do you believe in me?”

*Nottingham* Lots of people seem to think that believing in anyone is a silly way to spend your life. How could anyone with any sense possibly think there is a God? What do we need a 'God' for anyway? If this 'God' is so good and loving as some people say he is, why are there so many wars and so much fighting between people? Why are they so cruel to each other and why doesn't he stop them? Why is there so much poverty in the world? Why do awful things happen to good people? And why does this 'God' not do what I ask him to do for me? How can you pray to someone who's not there in the first place? So isn't all this 'faith business' just one big fairy story?

*Loughborough* But what would have happened if there was no faith? If there was no faith, there would have been no scriptures or sacred writings. If there was no faith, there would have been no church or community of believers. If there was no faith there would be no cathedrals or beautiful churches like this one built to the glory of God. No great music, or works of art

*Scunthorpe* If there was no faith there would be no saints, no Christian tradition. If there was no faith there would be no people, who lived through the centuries doing good for others with no thought for themselves. If there was no faith, there would be no SPANNED or any of our groups either! If there were no faith, there would be no life for us or any purpose in our living. If there were no faith, there would be no Holy Mass, no forgiveness, no joy and happiness for us when we discovered the truth of living – give away your life so that you may find it

*Hinckley* St.Peter said: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. And that is what we have been thinking about this year. What do we mean when we say, “I believe”? How might this change our lives and help us to see and do things differently? And can we, in the midst of a world that has rejected him, still be followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, and live in his way?

### **Rite of Penance**

Priest For the times we have not believed in you, Lord have mercy

**All Lord have mercy.**

Priest For the times we have refused to believe in you, Christ have mercy.

**All Christ have mercy**

Priest For the times we have abandoned you, Lord have mercy

**All Lord have mercy**

**Prayer** Father in heaven, in this Year of Faith we ask your help and your blessing. Make our faith strong; make our faith loving; make our faith reach out with your message to others all over the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord

### **First Reading**

*Loughborough group* Here are some stories from the Bible about people who believed in God a long time ago, and then what happened to them. It wasn't long after God made the man and his wife and put them into a beautiful garden that things started to go wrong. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbade them to, and then found out what good and evil were – living in God's way or in ours. They had two children and one, Cain, murdered the other, Abel, because he was jealous of him. So God began to think that maybe making a world was not such a good idea after all. And for the next

hundred years or so, he had no reason to change his mind. He was deeply hurt and sorry that he had ever made the human race. “I will end the whole dreadful business, men Animals, reptiles, wild birds, everything,” he said, “I’m sorry I ever began it”. One man, however, was different from the others – Noah.

*Sing and mime “Rise and Shine, give God the glory, glory”*

*Nottingham group*

Narrator        Of course we know that human nature being what it is, things did not get better but worse. God’s people continually turned away from him and did things he didn’t like, so he was getting rather short of friends.

*God sits in a chair looking around for friends and Abraham appears, bows and God takes his hand*

He watched and he waited for someone really special to turn up and it took about 400 years, because God wanted to start a new kind of people. You would think that he would choose someone young to start a new people, but no, he chose a middle aged man who had lived in large cities all his life and had a good looking wife but no children. He had a good business a fine home and many servants, and his name was Abraham. God spoke to him – he was his friend after all – and told him to leave all his home and beautiful things and that he would be the father of a great nation.

*Enter Sarah and they walk through the desert together. God shows his the land*

Abraham’s wife, Sarah, who was now getting older and past the time when she might have children, just laughed at her husband when he told her, but Abraham believed God and trusted in him, so he set off. It was a long and difficult journey that took them through the desert, into Egypt and out of it, and there were many problems on the way with his family, because Abraham did not know yet where God meant him to be. Eventually, when they got to the Jordan valley, God told him that this land would be his and that he would have thousands of descendants. And sure enough, even though by now both Abraham and Sarah were old, they had a son called Isaac.

*Isaac appears and Abraham hugs him*

God told Abraham that he was going to destroy the cities of people who had turned against him, but his friend persuaded him to relent. As years went on, God was to test the faith and friendship of his friend in a big way. He told him to take his son off into the mountains, to build an altar with some wood and to offer his son as a sacrifice to God as they used to do with animals.

*This is acted out, and an angel comes to stay Abraham’s hand*

So Abraham took his son with him and built the altar. He lay his son, his only son on the altar and was about to kill him with a knife when God stopped his hand and said to him: “Now I know for sure that you believe in me and trust me; you did not refuse your only son to me”. Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a bush, and he sacrificed the animal to God in place of his son. God rewarded Abraham for his faith and made him the father of a great nation – the people of Israel.

*God and Abraham hug each other and God points to the nation ahead*

**Psalm** As the deer pants for the water

**Gospel** *Hinckley*

Narrator Here is a story we all know from St. John’s gospel. On Easter Sunday evening, the apostles gathered together in the upper room. They were frightened of the Jewish leaders so they had locked the doors. Then, all of a sudden, Jesus was right there with them

*The apostles gather and Jesus appears. They all look shocked*

Jesus spoke to them and said: “Peace be with you”. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord and he said to them again, “peace be with you. Look, it’s really me, here are my hands and my side – it really is me.

*Jesus shows them his hands and side. Then he withdraws*

Later, one of the disciples, Thomas, who had not been there when Jesus came, returned and the others told him all about it. But Thomas was not convinced. He thought they were made. “Look,” he said “unless I can see the marks in his hands and side, I refuse to believe”. Eight days later, the apostles were in the room again and this time, Thomas was with them. Jesus came among them again and spoke to Thomas. “Put your hand in my side; put your finger into my hands. Don’t doubt any more, but believe.” Thomas was humbled and embarrassed. “My Lord and my God,” he said. Jesus said, “You believe because you can see me; happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

*This is acted out*

This is the gospel of the Lord

**Homily** *Derby group*

As we have just heard, Thomas was one of those “prove it” people. This is not an unusual situation for us even today. Thomas didn’t believe unless he could see for himself. So many people over the centuries have believed without

seeing for themselves. We haven't seen Jesus but for the most time we have faith and believe in him. So we are very lucky. This doesn't mean that we do not have doubts sometimes but most of the time we have faith and that is very special. Not to have faith is a sad thing and it can have an effect on your daily life. Because when we are without faith we can feel very lonely. We are all children of God and brothers and sister of the Lord Jesus, no matter which church we belong to or what our Christian beliefs are. In SPANNED we learn about God and Jesus. We take part in Mass and other services with our club and friends from other groups. We go to different places each year to meet up like Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Hinckley, Loughborough, Scunthorpe and Llandudno. Some groups go on pilgrimage to Lourdes. We tell people the Good News about Jesus in words, music, mime and songs. We listen to stories about Jesus from the Bible

We tell them that Jesus is close to them always and try to be close to him. We do projects about God and his love each year like: "Live Simply"; "Home is a Holy Place"; "The Story" and "Have I got 'Good News for you?'" This project is for a special year called the "Year of Faith" When we say we 'believe' in Jesus, that means we have 'faith'. The group of people who have faith in Jesus is called the "Church". We will learn about people who had faith in God in the past as well as today – some from the Bible, like Noah, Abraham and Thomas and some from history. Sometimes it is difficult to have faith. to believe in God whom we cannot see. We have heard about him from others – our families, friends and the Church. Some people forget about God and all they have been told about him and his love. We will think about what it means for me to have faith in God, to 'believe' in him. We will try to see how we need to change our lives if we say we believe in him, even though sometimes that is difficult. We will go out with our groups and SPANNED to show people what God is like and what it does for us when we believe in him. Here is a prayer that we can say together to show God we believe in him.

**Creed**      *Leicester and Hinckley groups*

We have written a creed, that is a statement of our faith, of what we believe (*this could be mimed or signed*)

**All            We believe in God**

**We believe God made the world and everything in it**

**We believe God is everyone's Father**

**We believe God made us to know and love him and be his friends**

**We believe in Jesus**

**We believe Jesus is great**

**We believe Jesus is the Son of God**

**We believe Jesus died on the cross for us**

**We believe Jesus rose from the dead**

**We believe Jesus is alive**

**We believe Jesus is with us today and will be always**

**We believe Jesus gives us himself and lives in us through the Holy Spirit**

**We believe Jesus will come again**

**We believe we will meet Jesus in Heaven when we die**

**We believe in the church as the family of God**

**We believe that we are all brothers and sisters throughout the world**

**We believe it is our duty to look after and care for each other**

**We believe that God the Father wants us all to be with him for ever**

**Bidding Prayers**     *Loughborough Group*

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Priest   | On this very special day when we are all gathered together, let us turn to our God and ask him to make us strong in faith so that we can show his love to everyone  |
| Reader 1 | Dear God, please help us to know that you love us just as we are today and show us how to love you back. Lord hear us   |
| Reader 2 | We thank you for the life and love you have given us, for warm homes and loving families, for health and strength, for energy and enthusiasm. May we use these gifts for you and each other. Lord hear us               |
| Reader 3 | Bless our parishes, our groups and all who work in them. May we be excited each day by the new things we can learn about you and your love. Lord hear us  |
| Reader 4 | We pray for all who help us to know and learn about you. Guide and protect them in their work. Lord hear us   |
| Reader 5 | We pray for those who do not want to believe in you and who make it difficult for others to do so. Open their eyes and their hearts to you, so that they may believe in you as well, and encourage others. Lord hear us |

Reader 6      Keep us from just thinking about ourselves, about what we have, how we look and from worrying what other people may think about us. Help us to be confident in your love for us and show us how we may find our lives in looking outwards to those around us. Lord hear us

Reader 7      We pray for all those great people who have tried to show us your way and who now live with you in heaven. We remember specially our friends who have died since we last celebrated this Mass together: Paul Muursepp, Pattie Wykes, Gordon Eades, Sylvia Lowe, Mary Drayton, Kathleen Nolan, Nikki Burns, Gilly Spencer, Ashley Skinner and Monica Mobbs. May they live with you in peace and happiness for ever. Lord hear us

Reader 8      Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me". We ask her to show us how to be the servants of the Lord too, as we pray with her: Hail Mary

**Offertory Hymn**    The love I have for you, my Lord

**Prayer over the gifts**    Dear Father in heaven, we bring you this bread, we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves – all we are at the moment and all that we can be with your help, which you give to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Preface**

God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you for your great love for us. You have given us life and love and the faith to believe in you and your Son. Faith is a gift to be treasured; faith is a gift to be shared; faith is a gift which lifts up our minds and hearts to you; faith is a gift which brings us close to Jesus your Son and he to us. Faith enables us to serve you through him; faith brings us into your eternal presence. And so with all the angels and saints, we praise you as we say:

### **Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

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

**Final Prayer**    Dear Father, we pray that through this holy Mass which we have celebrated together today, you will increase our faith in you and make us never afraid to speak of it and share it with others. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

### **Blessing**

**Final Hymn**    Blest be the Lord



## Session 6 What is God like?

We have heard about people from the Bible who believed in God and what happened them because of it. But what is God really like, and what is he like for us? This is a very big question, which we will not answer in a night. Everyone speaks of God differently; some people don't know what God is really like but for others he is someone real, a friend, a Father, someone to help and protect us. Ask yourself, how do you know what God is like? Did you find out for yourself, or did someone tell you? If so, who, and who told them?

*Get members into groups and ask them what they think God is like. Hopefully they will come up with answers such as:*

- someone to help you when you feel sad;
- God is love;
- God is special, helpful, understanding and forgiving;
- God gives us friends to care for us;
- He is our Father; he guides us and provides for us;
- God lives in heaven, but he is also all around us;
- God knows everything;
- God sent Jesus to be our friend and help us to be like him;
- God made heaven and earth, and all of us;
- God is a kind man who looks after you;
- I like to talk to God; he is a person who listens to us;
- God is a father-figure, a powerful person;
- we need to develop our friendship with him by praying;
- if we do not pray, we might drift away from him;
- God is all goodness, and it is not easy to say just what he is like;
- sometimes bad things happen to us; perhaps God allows this, but if he does, that is not easy to understand or accept.

There was a very clever priest called Fr.Karl Rahner, who wrote over 1,000 books about God, and in one of them he said: surely someone must say something about God, about wonderful and lovely things, about happiness, beauty and the things that God has made. Maybe we don't think a lot about God, but lots of people do. For centuries, people have tried to show what God is like, in beautiful paintings, in poetry, writing, great buildings and music.

Use some slides of great paintings or works of art and then play some sacred music for everyone to listen to. The painters and composers used all their skill and talent to show what God was really like. There must be someone still who will talk about God, try to say something about him to others.

Song - O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder.

## Session 7 What do others say God is like?

We will look at the comments of a number of children, read out by several voices:

Voice 1 Dear God, instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you got now?

- Voice 2 Dear God, are you real? Some people don't believe it. If you are, you better do something quick.
- Voice 3 Dear God, a lot of people say bad things with your name in it, but I never do.
- Voice 4 Dear God, we got a lot of religion in our house, so don't worry about us.
- Voice 1 Dear God, are boys better than girls? I know you are one, but try to be fair.
- Voice 2 Dear God, I read your book and I liked it. Where do you get your ideas?
- Voice 3 Dear God, why do I have to pray when you know anyway what I want? But I'll do it if it makes you feel better.
- Voice 4 Dear God, why did you make the sky blue and the grass green? Are they the only colours you've got?
- Voice 1 Dear God, last week it rained three days. We thought it would be like Noah's Ark, but it wasn't. I'm glad, because you could only take two things, remember, and we have three cats.
- Voice 2 Dear God, did you think up hugging? That is a good thing.
- Voice 3 Dear God, I want to be just like you when I'm your age. OK?
- Voice 4 Dear God, if I was God, I wouldn't be as good at it. Keep it up.
- Voice 1 Dear God, if you made the sun, the moon and the stars, you must have had lots of equipment.
- Voice 2 Dear God, when I wake up, I am glad you left everything right where it was.
- Voice 3 I think God's silly, because he should have painted everyone the same colour, and then they wouldn't fight.
- Voice 4 God had lots of children but he never married, which he should have done.
- Voice 1 My granny always talks to Jesus on Sundays. The rest of the week she goes to bingo, which is where he lives sometimes.
- Voice 2 If I was God, I would go to all the countries and say love each other and stop being greedy.
- Voice 3 My sister is always writing to Jesus and he sends her chocolates, and once he sent her two lots of chocolates on the same day, but she won't tell me where to write.

Voice 4      God loves everyone who is good like me and my friend Lucy, but not people like Gillian who takes other people's rubbers.

How do we know about God? How did we find out in the first place? Who told us? We learned about God from the Bible, his very special book

"This is the story of the beginning of everything, before anything and anyone ever was, when there was only God on his own. A quiet thoughtful God, full of love to give and with no one to give it to. God had been by himself for a long time. Perhaps he felt a bit empty, even bored, looking out into nothing. Sitting, silent, still. And then suddenly, he thought: I need something to do, something to live for; I know, I'll make a world.

Mind you, before God started to make the world, he gave it a lot of thought. Big job, not much to go on; no previous experience of such a thing; and no good materials, either. 'Right,' said God, 'first things first. Some light to work by. Let there be light.' And there was. 'Pleasant effect,' God thought, and turned it on an off a few times. Sometimes more dark, sometimes more light, and 'I'll call them night and day', he said. God then looked at the endless water. 'Too much,' he thought, and decided to halve it. But where to put the other half, nowhere to empty it. So he pointed upwards and the water lifted into a gorgeous roof with every colour and every kind of cloud. God looked up. 'I will call that heaven', he said, 'It looks a nice place to live.' And so he moved in.

God drew on the waters below with his finger and the land came up - 'the earth and the seas' - he said. It looked a bit bare so he covered it with plants and all kinds of vegetation, with its own seed.

Then God thought of a way to improve on his day and night invention which was a bit harsh on the eyes with its sudden change. He hung outside his home, two globes of light - a large one to look after the day (the Sun) and a smaller one for the night (the Moon). Nice effect. Then he made a million smaller moons, which he called stars. God was enjoying himself. 'Next', he said, 'things that fly and move, and crawl and swim and walk'. He used every colour and shape that came into his mind to make huge sea monsters and birds, tiny insects, delicate dancing creatures and slow heavy ones. Nothing was forgotten. 'Multiply', he said, 'fill the seas and the land and the sky; there's plenty of room.' And so, they did.

God was pleased with his work, but he still had an odd feeling of loneliness. Of something still to do. He sat looking down into a calm lake, down at his own reflection. Then he smiled. 'That's it,' he said: 'I'll make someone to talk to. A man. He can look like me.' So God took some dust and wet it. He moulded it into a shape, like a statue, lying down on the ground. Then he bent over it and gently blew into its nostrils. Very slowly, it began to move, and got unsteadily to its feet. And they looked at each other.

(Music: 'Largo', from Dvorak's "New World Symphony")

## Liturgy 2 – What is God like? – Scunthorpe, June 30 2013

**Entry Hymn** He's got the whole world in his hands

**Introduction** *Scunthorpe*

**Reader** Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Scunthorpe. We hope you have enjoyed your time with us today already. It's always lovely for us to have you here. As we all know, this year in SPANNED we have been thinking about what faith means. What do we mean when we say that we believe in God? How do we know anything about him and who told us? Here are some comments about what God is like from children:

*Scunthorpe* Dear God, are you real? Some people don't believe it. If you are, you better do something quick.

*Hinckley* Dear God, we got a lot of religion in our house, so don't worry about us.

*Loughborough* Dear God, are boys better than girls? I know you are one, but try to be fair.

*Leicester* Dear God, I read your book and I liked it. Where do you get your ideas?

*Nottingham* Dear God, why did you make the sky blue and the grass green? Are they the only colours you've got?

*Derby* Dear God, last week it rained three days. We thought it would be like Noah's Ark, but it wasn't. I'm glad, because you could only take two things, remember, and we have three cats.

*Scunthorpe* Dear God, did you think up hugging? That is a good thing.

*Hinckley* Dear God, I want to be just like you when I'm your age. OK?

*Loughborough* Dear God, if I was God, I wouldn't be as good at it. Keep it up.

*Leicester* Dear God, if you made the sun, the moon and the stars, you must have had lots of equipment.

*Nottingham* Dear God, when I wake up, I am glad you left everything right where it was.

*Derby* I think God's silly, because he should have painted everyone the same colour, and then they wouldn't fight.

### **Rite of Penance**

**Priest** For the times we have not believed in you, Lord have mercy

**All** **Lord have mercy.**

**Priest** For the times we have refused to believe in you, Christ have mercy.

**All** **Christ have mercy**

Priest            For the times we have abandoned you, Lord have mercy  
**All                Lord have mercy**

**Prayer**            Father in heaven, in this Year of Faith we ask your help and your blessing.  
 Make our faith strong; make our faith loving; make our faith reach out with  
 your message to others all over the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord

**First Reading**    *Hopefully all groups will be able to take part*

How do we know about God? How did we find out in the first place? Who told us? We learned about God from the Bible, his very special book

"This is the story of the beginning of everything, before anything and anyone ever was, when there was only God on his own. A quiet thoughtful God, full of love to give and with no one to give it to. God had been by himself for a long time. Perhaps he felt a bit empty, even bored, looking out into nothing. Sitting, silent, still. And then suddenly, he thought: I need something to do, something to live for; I know, I'll make a world.

Mind you, before God started to make the world, he gave it a lot of thought. Big job, not much to go on; no previous experience of such a thing; and no good materials, either. 'Right,' said God, 'first things first. Some light to work by. Let there be light.' And there was. 'Pleasant effect,' God thought, and turned it on an off a few times. Sometimes more dark, sometimes more light, and 'I'll call them night and day', he said. God then looked at the endless water. 'Too much,' he thought, and decided to halve it. But where to put the other half, nowhere to empty it. So he pointed upwards and the water lifted into a gorgeous roof with every colour and every kind of cloud. God looked up. 'I will call that heaven', he said, 'It looks a nice place to live.' And so he moved in.

God drew on the waters below with his finger and the land came up - 'the earth and the seas' - he said. It looked a bit bare so he covered it with plants and all kinds of vegetation, with its own seed.

Then God thought of a way to improve on his day and night invention which was a bit harsh on the eyes with its sudden change. He hung outside his home, two globes of light - a large one to look after the day (the Sun) and a smaller one for the night (the Moon). Nice effect. Then he made a million smaller moons, which he called stars. God was enjoying himself. 'Next', he said, 'things that fly and move, and crawl and swim and walk'. He used every colour and shape that came into his mind to make huge sea monsters and birds, tiny insects, delicate dancing creatures and slow heavy ones. Nothing was forgotten. 'Multiply', he said, 'fill the seas and the land and the sky; there's plenty of room.' And so, they did.

God was pleased with his work, but he still had an odd feeling of loneliness. Of something still to do. He sat looking down into a calm lake, down at his own reflection. Then he smiled. 'That's it,' he said: 'I'll make someone to talk to. A man. He can look like me.' So God took some dust and wet it. He moulded it into a shape, like a statue, lying down on the ground. Then he bent over it and gently blew into its nostrils. Very slowly, it began to move, and got unsteadily to its feet. And they looked at each other.

*(Music: 'Largo', from Dvorak's "New World Symphony")*

**Psalm**            Glory and praise to our God

**Gospel**            *Hinckley*

Narrator            Here is a good story about faith from St. Matthew's gospel, but the faith of the person who recognised that Jesus could do wonderful things, was not that of a Jewish person, but a Roman official. A reading from St. Matthew's gospel

When Jesus went to Capernaum, a Roman centurion came up to him and pleaded with him:

Centurion          Sir, my servant is lying at home paralysed and in great pain.

Narrator            Jesus replied

Jesus                I will come myself and cure him

Narrator            But the centurion said

Centurion          Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be healed.

Narrator            When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him

Jesus                I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this

Narrator            And he turned to the centurion and said

Jesus                Go back home; you have believed, so let this be done for you.

Narrator            And the servant was cured at that moment. This is the gospel of the Lord.

**Homily**            *Show DVD of music and art – this is what God is like*

**Creed**              *Leicester and Hinckley groups*

We have written a creed, that is a statement of our faith, of what we believe (*this could be mimed or signed*)

**All                    We believe in God**

**We believe God made the world and everything in it**

**We believe God is everyone's Father**

**We believe God made us to know and love him and be his friends**

**We believe in Jesus**

**We believe Jesus is great**

**30)**

**We believe Jesus is the Son of God**

**We believe Jesus died on the cross for us**

**We believe Jesus rose from the dead**

**We believe Jesus is alive**

**We believe Jesus is with us today and will be always**

**We believe Jesus gives us himself and lives in us through the Holy Spirit**

**We believe Jesus will come again**

**We believe we will meet Jesus in Heaven when we die**

**We believe in the church as the family of God**

**We believe that we are all brothers and sisters throughout the world**

**We believe it is our duty to look after and care for each other**

**We believe that God the Father wants us all to be with him for ever**

**Bidding Prayers**     *Loughborough Group*

Priest     On this very special day when we are all gathered together, let us turn to our God and ask him to make us strong in faith so that we can show his love to everyone

Reader 1     Dear God, please help us to know that you love us just as we are today and show us how to love you back. Lord hear us

Reader 2     We thank you for the life and love you have given us, for warm homes and loving families, for health and strength, for energy and enthusiasm. May we use these gifts for you and each other. Lord hear us

Reader 3     Bless our parishes, our groups and all who work in them. May we be excited each day by the new things we can learn about you and your love. Lord hear us

Reader 4     We pray for all who help us to know and learn about you. Guide and protect them in their work. Lord hear us

Reader 5     We pray for those who do not want to believe in you and who make it difficult for others to do so. Open their eyes and their hearts to you, so that they may believe in you as well, and encourage others. Lord hear us

- Reader 6      Keep us from just thinking about ourselves, about what we have, how we look and from worrying what other people may think about us. Help us to be confident in your love for us and show us how we may find our lives in looking outwards to those around us. Lord hear us
- Reader 7      We pray for all those great people who have tried to show us your way and who now live with you in heaven.. May they live with you in peace and happiness for ever. Lord hear us
- Reader 8      Mary said, “I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me”. We ask her to show us how to be the servants of the Lord too, as we pray with her: Hail Mary
- Priest          Dear Father, please grant the prayers we have spoken with our lips and all the prayers that are hidden in the silence of our hearts. We ask you this through Christ our Lord

**Offertory Hymn**      I give my hands

**Prayer over the gifts**      Dear Father in heaven, we bring you this bread, we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves – all we are at the moment and all that we can be with your help, which you give to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Preface**

God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you for your great love for us. You have given us life and love and the faith to believe in you and your Son. Faith is a gift to be treasured; faith is a gift to be shared; faith is a gift which lifts up our minds and hearts to you; faith is a gift which brings us close to Jesus your Son and he to us. Faith enables us to serve you through him; faith brings us into your eternal presence. And so with all the angels and saints, we praise you as we say:

### **Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

**Communion Music**      “O Lord, listen to my prayer” (*Margaret Rizza CD*)

**Hymn**              As the deer pants for the water

**Final Prayer**      Dear Father, we pray that through this holy Mass which we have celebrated together today, you will increase our faith in you and make us never afraid to speak of it and share it with others. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

### **Blessing**

**Final Hymn**      O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder



## Session 8 What is God like? – our answers

The Catechesis is based on the answers given to the question during previous club night discussions.

### Hinckley

God is...life, love, has wavy hair and a goaty beard, forgiving, understanding, caring, good, alright, always there for you, always an angel

We are his favourites; he performs miracles; he thinks bigger than us – God is proper clever; he is happy when we are; he is sad when we are; he hears all our prayers; he is like a father figure; he talks to Jesus; he tells us the gospels through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; he is our friend and somebody we can talk to; he helps people; he stops the weather

We think that God is a nice stately man who looks like your Dad. He is very understanding and would never turn away when you want to talk to him. He is a very loving man; anytime we need help we can pray to him and hope that our prayers are answered. We feel that he is a family man who comes and tries to help us when we need him.

Some people thought that Jesus did not heal people properly – they didn't believe him; some people did not like him one bit.

### Derby

God looks over us and helps us in times of need; looks after everyone (the poor, the sick, the rich, the healthy); God and Jesus helped me when my mother was in hospital and when she was very sick; God saves us as we serve him; he is kind to all even if you do bad; he is the creator for feelings and life; God looks like a man with a beard and long hair; we think he looks like Billy . God made us a nice world with flowers, trees and birds that sing in the trees; he makes the sunshine, the rain, the wind and the snow

God is....a gentle man who created the world; a lovely man; God is beautiful, epic, love for the world; God is the man; God is the Saviour maker called Jesus; immortal, perfect, protective, trustworthy, near us, wise, good feelings inside us, all the best things in life; someone to walk with me; our Lord, we are close to him and he is close to us; he loves us and we love him; he makes us happy

Without God ... there wouldn't be a church....no bible or great gospels, a place called Lourdes, there wouldn't be a heaven; there might not be Jesus, he might be called something else and the angels wouldn't have gone to Mary and Joseph; no one would have helped me when my grandma died, there would be no people; we would have no feelings;

If he died, we would be upset

John and Minnie passed away and I thought of God. Every day I pray in my front room for me and Minnie; I pray to God when my friends die; when I go for a long walk in the country, I think of God; I think God is all right and doesn't do you any harm. People treat him wrong – they go to church just to say they have been to church. I believe in him. He was there today when I needed him when I wasn't very well. I used to swear a lot but after going to church I stopped and that was thanks to God.

We decided to reflect on two aspects of God that came out of our questions – God is our Father and God is Love

## GOD IS OUR FATHER

1. What do we think of when we think of a 'father?' Nice things: kind, loving, cuddly, trusting, forgiving. Stern things: telling us to do things - sometimes we do them, sometimes we don't.

A 'father' is someone who never gets upset; someone who looks after us; someone we feel comfortable with; someone who cares for us all the time.

2. What about God as a 'Father'? What happened after he had made the world?  
Cf. the story of Adam and Eve from David Kossoff's 'Bible Stories'

Well, the time passed quickly. Adam and Eve enjoyed each other's company and lived very simply and happily. They lived in the sun, quite naked, like babies on a beach. Neither of them touched the two trees that God forbade them to touch. Now when God made all the animals, he also gave them very different levels of intelligence or cunning, or craftiness. Some more, some less. One of the creatures that seemed to get a double share of cunning was the serpent. It lived in the garden and used to watch Eve as she would look at the two forbidden trees. "The fruit is delicious," it said to her one day, "delicious. A rare experience. Try it." Eve looked at the serpent and said: "if we eat or even touch it, we will die." "Nonsense," said the serpent. "This tree is magic and if you eat some of the fruit, not only will you not die, but you will be much wiser in every way." He had a smooth tongue, this serpent, and eventually Eve picked some of the fruit and talked Adam into doing the same. Then they waited to be wiser. Poor Adam and Eve! The wisdom in the tree was the knowledge of right and wrong. So right away they knew with their new wisdom that they'd done wrong – and they were ashamed. With their new wisdom, they looked at each other and no longer felt innocent like babies on a beach. They saw themselves guilty – and naked. So they hid their bodies from each other with garments made of leaves and they hid themselves from God, who walked in the garden. But God knew. "Where are you, Adam?" he said. "Why do you hide?" Adam came out. "Well, I heard you about and I wasn't dressed." God said, "why are you wearing those leaves?" "Well," said Adam. "You can't go round naked – it's not right." God said, "How do you know you were naked, or what 'naked' means, or what is right and wrong?" Well Adam blamed Eve and she blamed the serpent. God listened. So soon disobedience, so soon the need to punish. "You will leave the garden," he told them, "and never come back. Because if your disobedience, life will be harder for all who come after you. For women, childbirth will have pain, and men will have to work, to toil and sweat. Paradise like this garden will have to be earned; it will not again be given free. And all will return to the dust from which I made you – dust to dust. God was not angry. He was sad. It had begun to go wrong. There was worse to come. A whole Bible full!

3. Jesus tells us stories about God as Father - cf. 'The Brothers Quarrel' in Alan Dale's 'New World' or interactive

Once upon a time there was a farmer who had two sons: one was very good, dutiful and loyal. He never put a foot wrong, never cheated, never wasted time or money but the truth is he was a bit boring. Now the other son was nothing like that. He didn't believe in working all day; he wanted to have a good time and enjoy himself, so he thought that if he could get from his father what he would eventually inherit, he could go off and have a good time now, rather than having to wait for his Dad to die. So he went to his father and asked, "Dad, give me my

share of the cash". The father loved his son even though he knew what he was really like – not one bit dependable like his brother who was working away in the fields. He was a bit of a softy, so he gave in and handed over the money. His son said goodbye to the family and went off to enjoy himself in a life of wine, women and song. When he had so much money, he found that he made very many friends, very quickly and they were all having a great time partying and celebrating until...until one day the money ran out. All of a sudden he didn't seem to have any friends any more and next thing he was on his own. He thought, "I'll have to get a job, me, I'll actually have to work for a living." But it wasn't easy to get a job and the only one he could find was feeding pigs, which was dirty and miserable. After he had been doing this awful job for a while he got a bright idea: "I know, why don't I go home. I can tell my Dad I'm sorry for wasting his money, and just ask him to treat me like the servants. At least I'd be better off there than here with these pigs. So this is what he did. His father of course, had been worrying about him because he knew what he was like, and while he was still a long way from home, his father, who had been looking out for him, spotted him in the distance and ran out all the way to greet him. He hugged him and kissed him; he was so pleased to see him. The son said, 'look Dad, I've messed up. I've spent all your money and done you wrong. I don't deserve to be called your son any more so would you please have me back and just treat me like the servants. But his father would have none of it. He was so glad to see him that he shouted for the servants to come and told them to get some decent clothes for him – he was a bit, you know, whiffy, after being with all those pigs – and organise a huge banquet to celebrate. So off they went and began to celebrate. Meanwhile...meanwhile, back in the fields...the other son, you know the one that was just a bit boring, was working away and when it was time to come home he heard all the noise of the music and singing and dancing, so he called one of the servants to ask him what it meant. "You're brother's come home," he said, "and you're father's throwing a huge party for him because he's so glad to have him back. "What.....? what...?" he said. He was furious and refused to go into the party so stayed outside the house sulking. Eventually his father came out to him to see what was the matter. "Look, father," he said, "all these years I've worked for you, worked and slaved every day, and you never had even the smallest of parties for me and my friends, but when this layabout, this waster of a brother of mine comes home, you go mad and have a huge celebration. It's just not fair." The father spoke gently to him, "now look, son," he said, "we've been together a long time and all I have is yours; you know that. But it was only right that we should celebrate because your brother was dead and lost to us and now he's come home and is alive again."

Think of this story from the Father's point of view. What sort of man was he? Too lenient, soft, upset, perhaps? What happened when he got his son back? Nb. he went out to look for him and the son did not even have to say he was sorry. What would your father do if you spent all his money? - 'my Dad would kill me if I did that?' What about the elder brother? Was he right to feel that it wasn't fair. Should his father have sent someone out to tell him what had happened? This is a Father who is taken advantage of, whose goodness is taken for granted? Are we like that with God? What sort of Father is he?

## **GOD IS LOVE**

1. What do we mean by 'love'? - someone we must trust, taking care of people, love means a girlfriend and getting married, if you love someone, you would do anything for them.

Cf. 'God Bless Love' by Nanette Newman

- I think you can fall in love if you have your picture taken in front of the church.
- love is important, because if people did not love each other there wouldn't be any people.
- true love is when something has died and we still remember it, like my hamster.
- my tortoise fell in love but it made him tired, and he went to bed for about four years. I think love does make you tired, especially old women; they always sleep a lot.
- I sometimes think I love everything and everybody, but I know I don't. - I wouldn't fall in love because girls are all spotty and they whisper.
- when you go to church you put money in the box and God loves you.
- everybody loves baby Jesus even my uncle and both my brothers, but I don't. I love the three wise men, because they brought presents.
- it's a pity you have to fall in love with boys because they always pinch you.
- you must take care of love - if you don't it goes bad.

2. What would you do for someone you love? Would you give up your favourite TV programme? Would you put yourself out for them, really? Nb. the love of a father, mother, son, sister, wife, husband and friend are all different, but they have one thing in common - if you love someone, you forget about yourself in order to please them and make them happy. Think of Mother Teresa for example - she gave up her whole life because she loved God and wanted to look after dying people in order to do 'something beautiful' for him.

3. Sometimes it will hurt you to love someone - think of Jesus and what his love did: Cf. Alan Dale p.263, quoting 1 Cor. - 'the love of Jesus drives us on - when we realize that he gave his life for all people, so that everybody should have something bigger to live for than just himself and what he can get for himself. Jesus gave his life for everybody. We don't think of people now in the way that people ordinarily think of each other. I once thought of Jesus as my enemy and the enemy of my people. I don't think of him like that any more. We try to think of people as God thinks of them. When anybody becomes a friend of Jesus, the world's a new world for him; the old world has gone and a new world has been born.'

4. How do we respond to love? Cf. going round to collect people for the club and the sacrifice of drivers doing without their tea - how will they feel if we say we don't feel like coming out, it's too cold, or we can't be bothered? What sort of response to love is that? Our clubs are built on love, because we believe in God and Jesus - we believe Jesus has shown us how to love and be good to each other, and we want to love him in return by doing what he would like us to do - ie. love each other.

5. Prayer - 'There are two loves only' - Michel Quoist: 'Prayers of Life', pp.79-81

Song - O the love of my Lord is the essence.

### Liturgy 3 – God our loving Father – Hinckley, September 28 2013

**Entry Hymn** O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

**Greeting** *Fr.Frank*

**Welcome** *Simon Brittle*

Dear friends, welcome to you all to our SPANNED Annual Mass. Of course we are very sad that we cannot have our bishop with us today, but he has been quite poorly and now has to keep his foot up for six months so that it can heal. We send him our very best wishes and prayers and please sign the card that we have made for him, which Fr.Frank will take to him next week. Welcome to all our priest friends and to the two new priests of our diocese, Fr.John Martin, who is joining us as a trustee and Fr.Neil Peoples, who will be helping out with the Loreto Club. We hope that we can all have the special privilege of receiving their first blessing individually after Mass in the centre. Of course, thank you to everyone who has made an effort to be here and to all at St.Peter's for making us so welcome.

**Introduction** *All groups*

*Scunthorpe*

Reader 1 As you know this year is called “the Year of Faith”, and we have been thinking about what ‘faith’ is and what it means for us to believe today.

Reader 2 You remember in Derby that we were playing the true and false game to see what it meant to believe someone

Reader 3 To know they were telling you the truth. So we had some statements and asked if they were true or false.

Reader 4 Like, “it’s always sunny in Scunny”!!

All Yeah!

*Someone holds up a placard saying “false”*

Reader 1 Sadly...!

Reader 2 And, like, “Father Frank is very thin”

*Someone holds up a placard saying “false”*

Reader 3 Ah, yes but not for long! We hope!

All We hope!

Reader 4 That’s because Father Frank and the bishop are both going on a diet

Reader 1 Purely for health reasons of course

All Of course!

Reader 2 A sort of ecclesiastical weight watchers together

Reader 3 So watch this space

*Someone puts their hands around Father Frank's waist*

Reader 4 No, watch this space!

Reader 1 *(coughs)* Ahem! Moving on....

Reader 2 Oh yes

Reader 3 We have heard about those people in the Bible who believed in God like Noah, Abraham and the Roman centurion who believed Jesus could cure his son

Reader 4 Then those who didn't believe, like Thomas

Reader 5 Then we thought about what God is like and how could we know

*Nottingham*

Reader 1 Then we learned about how God made the world in Scunthorpe

Reader 2 Did God make the world in Scunthorpe?

Reader 3 No, of course he didn't, silly! We learned about how he made the world when we were in Scunthorpe!

Reader 2 Oh, I see!

Reader 3 And then, on our club nights, we asked each other what we thought God was like

*Hinckley*

Reader 1 We thought that God is...life, love, has wavy hair and a goaty beard; he is forgiving, understanding, caring, good, and always there for you

Reader 2 We are his favourites; he performs miracles; he thinks bigger than us – God is proper clever

Reader 3 He is happy when we are; he is sad when we are; he hears all our prayers; he is like a father figure

Reader 4 We think that God is a nice stately man who looks like your Dad. He is very understanding and would never turn away when you want to talk to him.

*Derby*

Reader 1 We think that God looks over us and helps us in times of need. He looks after everyone (the poor, the sick, the rich, the healthy)

Reader 2 God is kind to all even if you do bad

Reader 3 God looks like a man with a beard and long hair; we think he looks like Billy .

*They point at Billy*

Reader 4 God made us a nice world with flowers, trees and birds that sing in the trees; he makes the sunshine, the rain, the wind and the snow

Reader 5 I think of God; I think God is all right and doesn't do you any harm. People treat him wrong

Reader 6 I believe in him. He was there today when I needed him when I wasn't very well. I used to swear a lot but after going to church I stopped and that was thanks to God

Reader 1 Today at our Mass, we are going to think about God as our loving Father and how we can love him back.

*Leicester*

Reader 1 What do we mean by 'love'?

Reader 2 Trusting in someone, taking care of people, especially when they are ill

Reader 3 Getting married and giving your life away to another

Reader 4 If you love someone, you would do anything for them, even die for them, like Our Lord did for all of us.

Reader 5 Here are some lovely thoughts from a book called "God bless Love"

*Scunthorpe* I think you can fall in love if you have your picture taken in front of the church

*Leicester* Love is important, because of people did not love each other there wouldn't be any people.

*Nottingham* True love is when something has died and we still remember it, like my hamster

- Derby* My tortoise fell in love but it made him tired, and he went to bed for about four years. I think love does make you tired, especially old women; they always sleep a lot
- Hinckley* I sometimes think I love everything and everybody, but I know I don't. - I wouldn't fall in love because girls are all spotty and they whisper
- Scunthorpe* Everybody loves baby Jesus even my uncle and both my brothers, but I don't. I love the three wise men, because they brought presents
- Leicester* You must take care of love - if you don't it goes bad.

### **Rite of Penance**

Fr.Frank Now let us turn to God our Father and Jesus his Son to ask forgiveness for all the times our love for them has gone bad because of our selfishness and sin:

Fr.Frank For the times we have not believed in you, Lord have mercy

**All Lord have mercy.**

Fr.Frank For the times we have refused to believe in you, Christ have mercy.

**All Christ have mercy**

Fr.Frank For the times we have abandoned you, Lord have mercy

**All Lord have mercy**

**Prayer** Father in heaven, in this Year of Faith we ask your help and your blessing. Make our faith strong; make our faith loving; make our faith reach out with your message to others all over the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord

**First Reading** A reading from the first letter of St.Paul to his friends in Corinth  
*Leicester group*

The love of Jesus drives us on - when we realize that he gave his life for all people, so that everybody should have something bigger to live for than just himself and what he can get for himself. Jesus gave his life for everybody. We don't think of people now in the way that people ordinarily think of each other. I once thought of Jesus as my enemy and the enemy of my people. I don't think of him like that any more. We try to think of people as God thinks of them. When anybody becomes a friend of Jesus, the world's a new world for him; the old world has gone and a new world has been born. This is the Word of the Lord

**Psalm** Abba Father – glory Jesus Christ (*mimed –led by Hinckley group*)

**Gospel** Interactive of the parable of the prodigal Son *Nottingham*



Priest/Deacon A reading from the holy gospel according to St.Luke. Jesus told this story to his friends:

Narrator Once upon a time there was a farmer who had two sons

*First son enters*

one was very good, dutiful and loyal. He never put a foot wrong, never cheated, never wasted time or money but the truth is he was a bit boring.

*Second son enters. The Father puts his arms round his sons*

Now the other son was nothing like that. He didn't believe in working all day; he wanted to have a good time and enjoy himself, so he thought that if he could get from his father what he would eventually inherit, he could go off and have a good time now, rather than having to wait for his Dad to die. So he went to his father and asked:

Younger son Dad, give me my share of the cash

Narrator The father loved his son even though he knew what he was really like – not one bit dependable like his brother who was working away in the fields. He was a bit of a softy, so he gave in and handed over the money. His son said goodbye to the family and went off to enjoy himself in a life of wine, women and song.

*He goes away waving at them, and lots of 'friends' join him, he gives out money to them, they shake his hand and then party together*

When he had so much money, he found that he made very many friends, very quickly and they were all having a great time partying and celebrating until...until one day the money ran out. All of a sudden he didn't seem to have any friends any more and next thing he was on his own

*He empties his pockets, and the friends wave and back off*

He thought, "I'll have to get a job, me, I'll actually have to work for a living." But it wasn't easy to get a job and the only one he could find was feeding pigs, which was dirty and miserable.

*Pigs enter and he reacts*

After he had been doing this awful job for a while he got a bright idea: "I know, why don't I go home. I can tell my Dad I'm sorry for wasting his money, and just ask him to treat me like the servants. At least I'd be better off there than here with these pigs. So this is what he did.

*We see the father looking out for him and then going out to him*

His father of course, had been worrying about him because he knew what he was like, and while he was still a long way from home, his father, who had been looking out for him, spotted him in the distance and ran out all the way to greet him. He hugged him and kissed him; he was so pleased to see him. The son said,

Younger Son Look Dad, I've messed up

Narrator I've spent all your money and done you wrong. I don't deserve to be called your son any more so would you please have me back and just treat me like the servants. But his father would have none of it. He was so glad to see him that he shouted for the servants to come

Father Oi!

*The servants come*

Narrator And told them to get some decent clothes for him – he was a bit, you know, whiffy, after being with all those pigs – and organise a huge banquet to celebrate. So off they went and began to celebrate.

*The party begins*

Meanwhile....meanwhile, back in the fields....the other son, you know the one that was just a bit boring, was working away and when it was time to come home he heard all the noise of the music and singing and dancing, so he called one of the servants to ask him what it meant.

Elder Son Oi!

*The servant comes*

Narrator "You're brother's come home," he said, "and you're father's throwing a huge party for him because he's so glad to have him back.

Elder Son What.....? what...?

Narrator He was furious and refused to go into the party so stayed outside the house sulking. Eventually his father came out to him to see what was the matter. "Look, father," he said, "all these years I've worked for you, worked and slaved every day, and you never had even the smallest of parties for me and my friends, but when this layabout, this waster of a brother of mine comes home, you go mad and have a huge celebration. It's just not fair.

Elder Son It's not fair!

Narrator The father spoke gently to him, "now look, son," he said, "we've been together a long time and all I have is yours; you know that. But it was only

right that we should celebrate because your brother was dead and lost to us and now he's come home and is alive again."

Priest /Deacon This is the gospel of the Lord

**Homily**      *Fr.Frank*

*The homily should focus on:*

Think of this story from the Father's point of view. What sort of man was he? Too lenient, soft, upset, perhaps? What happened when he got his son back? Nb. he went out to look for him and the son did not even have to say he was sorry. What would your father do if you spent all his money? - 'my Dad would kill me if I did that?' What about the elder brother? Was he right to feel that it wasn't fair. Should his father have sent someone out to tell him what had happened? This is a Father who is taken advantage of, whose goodness is taken for granted? Are we like that with God? What sort of Father is he?

**Creed**      *Hinckley group*

We have written a creed, that is a statement of our faith, of what we believe (*signed*)

**All                    We believe in God**

**We believe God made the world and everything in it**

**We believe God is everyone's Father**

**We believe God made us to know and love him and be his friends**

**We believe in Jesus**

**We believe Jesus is great**

**We believe Jesus is the Son of God**

**We believe Jesus died on the cross for us**

**We believe Jesus rose from the dead**

**We believe Jesus is alive**

**We believe Jesus is with us today and will be always**

**We believe Jesus gives us himself and lives in us through the Holy Spirit**

**We believe Jesus will come again**

**We believe we will meet Jesus in Heaven when we die**

**We believe in the church as the family of God**

**We believe that we are all brothers and sisters throughout the world**

**We believe it is our duty to look after and care for each other**

**We believe that God the Father wants us all to be with him for ever**

**Bidding Prayers**     *Derby, Leicester and Scunthorpe groups*

Fr.Frank     On this very special day when we are all gathered together, let us turn to our God and ask him to make us strong in faith so that we can show his love to everyone

*Leicester*

Reader 1     Dear God, please help us to know that you love us just as we are today and show us how to love you back. Lord hear us

Reader 2     We thank you for the life and love you have given us, for warm homes and loving families, for health and strength, for energy and enthusiasm. May we use these gifts for you and each other. Lord hear us

*Scunthorpe*

Reader 3     Bless our parishes, our groups and all who work in them. May we be excited each day by the new things we can learn about you and your love. Lord hear us

Reader 4     We pray for all who help us to know and learn about you. Guide and protect them in their work. Lord hear us

Reader 5     We pray for those who do not want to believe in you and who make it difficult for others to do so. Open their eyes and their hearts to you, so that they may believe in you as well, and encourage others. Lord hear us

Reader 6     Keep us from just thinking about ourselves, about what we have, how we look and from worrying what other people may think about us. Help us to be confident in your love for us and show us how we may find our lives in looking outwards to those around us. Lord hear us

*Derby*

Reader 7     We pray for all those great people who have tried to show us your way and who now live with you in heaven.. May they live with you in peace and happiness for ever. Lord hear us

Reader 8 Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me". We ask her to show us how to be the servants of the Lord too, as we pray with her: Hail Mary

Reader 9 And now we take a moment to remember all our friends who have died since we last gathered for our annual Mass: Gordon Eades, Sylvia Lowe, Mary Drayton, Kathleen Nolan, Nikki Burns, Gilly Spencer, Ashley Skinner and Monica Mobbs. May they live with you in peace and happiness for ever. Lord hear us

*Candles are brought by relatives or group members*

Fr.Frank Dear Father, please grant the prayers we have spoken with our lips and all the prayers that are hidden in the silence of our hearts. We ask you this through Christ our Lord

**Offertory Hymn** O the love of my Lord is the essence

**Prayer over the gifts** Dear Father in heaven, we bring you this bread, we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves – all we are at the moment and all that we can be with your help, which you give to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Preface**

God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you for your great love for us. You have given us life and love and the faith to believe in you and your Son. Faith is a gift to be treasured; faith is a gift to be shared; faith is a gift which lifts up our minds and hearts to you; faith is a gift which brings us close to Jesus your Son and he to us. Faith enables us to serve you through him; faith brings us into your eternal presence. And so with all the angels and saints, we praise you as we say:

### **Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

#### **Communion Music**

**Hymn** The love I have for you, my Lord

**After Communion** *Simon Brittle*

On behalf of us all at SPANNED, we would like to make a small presentation to both of our new priests to help them in their ministry.

*Gifts are given to Fr.John and Fr.Neil*

And, as you all know, both the bishop and Fr.Frank have not been too well over the summer, so we'd like to give them a small gift to cheer them up. Fr.Frank, please take this book to the bishop and make use of yours yourself.

*Slimming books are presented to Fr.Frank*

**Final Prayer** Dear Father, we pray that through this holy Mass which we have celebrated together today, you will increase our faith in you and make us never afraid to speak of it and share it with others. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Blessing**

**Final Hymn** O Lord all the world belongs to you

### **Session 9 – Mary, the woman of faith**

*St.Peter's Players in Hinckley are hoping to present "Mother Mary" once again in Christmas week, to reflect, Mary, the woman of faith. If any members from other groups would like to join them you will be very welcome. Session 9 is the DVD of "Mother Mary"*

### **Session 10 – What can we learn from Mary?**

In this session, we will look at all the episodes in which Mary appears in the New Testament and try to see what they tell us about her.

Luke 1:26-38 – The Annunciation – what is happening here? What is Mary's reaction to the visit of the angel? What does she think when he asks her to be the Mother of Jesus? What is her reply? *Key phrase for us: "I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me". Use DVD of "Mother Mary" to demonstrate if necessary.*

Luke 1:39-56 – The Visitation – what is Mary doing even though she is pregnant herself and why? What is Elizabeth's reaction to her and why? Mary's prayer – what does it say? How does it show her faith? *Key phrase for us: "the Almighty has done great things for me; holy is his name"*

Luke 2:1-20 – The birth of Jesus – what does Mary say and do here? Nothing. *Key phrase for us: "As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart"*

Matthew 2:1-12 – The visit of the wise men – what does Mary do here?

Luke 2:22-38 – The Presentation of Jesus – what happened in this story? What was the reaction of Simeon and Anna? *Key phrase for us: "and a sword will pierce your own soul too"*

Luke 2:39-40, 51-52, 41-50 – Jesus grows up – two very short sentences about what happened when Jesus was aged 0-12, and then older

Luke 2:41-50 – Jesus with the doctors – what happened when Jesus is 'lost' and what is he doing? *Key phrase for us: "My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you"* – what does this tell us about Mary?

John 2:1-12 – The wedding at Cana – what was Mary doing there? What did she say when they ran out of wine? Do you think Jesus was rude to her? *Key phrase for us: “Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet?”*

Mark 3:31-35 – Jesus’ family appear. Does Jesus actually talk to them or just to his disciples? What does he mean by what he says? Do you think Mary would have been upset by this?

John 19:25-7 – Jesus on the cross – what did he say to his mother? Why did he address her in this way? What happened that Mary did not appear at all during Jesus’ time of ministry?

Having looked at these extracts, what picture do they build up for us of Mary, the woman of faith? How might we be like her in his service?

Hymn: Where are you bound, Mary, Mary?

### **Session 11 – The problems encountered by women**

Before we concentrate on particular modern ‘people of faith’, we have a slight interlude to reflect on the problems encountered by women today. We know, for example, that if Joseph had not taken ‘Mary home as his wife’, she would probably have been stoned to death for being an unmarried mother. If you google ‘women should’ on the United Nations website, you are likely to find some very interesting material:

a) women shouldn’t - have rights, vote, work, box.

*Women shouldn’t suffer from discrimination anymore*

b) women cannot – drive, be bishops, be trusted, speak in church

*Women cannot accept the way things are*

c) women should – stay at home, be slaves, be in the kitchen, not speak in church

*Women should have the right to make their own decisions*

d) women need to – be put in their place, know their place, be controlled, be disciplined

*Women need to be seen as equal*

*There followed a discussion in groups about these four titles and what we think Jesus might have said about women:*

Women shouldn’t - be abused, taken advantage of, be hurt, be without jobs

Women cannot – be ignored, be treated unequally

Women should – be respected, appreciated, loved, protected, treasured

Women need to – know all of the above, and be enabled to take their full place in society

How much do we think Mary was any of the above?

## Session 12 - People of Faith Today (A)

This session concentrates on a number of 'women of faith' like Mary, who live(d) in the modern era and all of whom had to pay a high price for their faith in God and in the rights of human beings to live and work freely.

### The Maryknoll Martyrs

Thirty years ago El Salvador was gripped by civil war. Over 75,000 people were 'disappeared' or killed. Among the murders: Archbishop Oscar Romero and four American churchwomen, including two Maryknoll Sisters. On December 2nd, 1980 four American churchwomen, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and lay missionary, Jean Donovan, were abducted by members of the Salvadoran National Guard, viciously abused and killed. Their deaths sparked a nationwide movement in the United States in solidarity with the people of El Salvador, who suffered terrible repression that lasted for another decade. While travelling the country with the Maryknoll Sisters World Awareness Team, Maura Clarke had once said, "I see in this work a channel for awakening real concern for the victims of injustice in today's world, a means to work for change, and to share deep concern for the sufferings of the poor and marginalised, the non-persons of our human family." In November 1980, Sr. Ita Ford and Sr. Maura Clarke attended a regional assembly of Maryknoll Sisters in Nicaragua. At the closing liturgy on December 1, 1980, Ita Ford read a passage from one of Archbishop Óscar Romero's final homilies:

"Christ invites us not to fear persecution because, believe me, brothers and sisters, the one who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor, and in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear, be tortured, to be held captive - and to be found dead."

The following day, December 2, 1980, Ita Ford and Maura Clarke boarded a plane to return to El Salvador. They were picked up by missionaries Dorothy Kazel, an Ursuline sister and Jean Donovan, a Roman Catholic laywoman. Several members of the National Guard stopped the vehicle they were driving after they left the airport in San Salvador. The four women were taken to a relatively isolated spot where they were tortured, raped, and murdered by the soldiers.

Earlier, in March, Archbishop Romero himself had been shot dead while saying Mass at the funeral of a friend's mother. His assassin escaped in the hubbub and has never been found. The day before his death, Romero appealed directly to members of the military, calling on them to refuse illegal orders: "We are your people. The peasants you kill are your own brothers and sisters. When you hear the voice of the man commanding you to kill, remember instead the voice of God. Thou Shalt Not Kill ... In the name of God, in the name of our tormented people whose cries rise up to heaven, I beseech you, I beg you, I command you, stop the repression."

Maryknoll Sister Madeline Dorsey, who served in El Salvador at the time, reflects on those harrowing days and the deaths of her friends and colleagues.



“On Dec. 3 in mid-morning Father Paul Schindler, head of the Cleveland mission team, called Terry through our telephone-telegram office in Santa Ana to ask: “Where are the girls?” Jean and Dorothy were expected at a parish meeting and Paul had already checked with the Asunción Sisters in San Salvador and Chalatenango. He asked us to come to La Libertad to help in the search. As Terry and I surveyed the burned up minibus the missionaries had driven, a man said, “This is the work of the guerrillas.” I promptly replied: “The opposition would never harm missionaries who are helping feed the hungry women and children caught in the fighting in the hills, and getting the little ones and the aged to refugee centres set up by the Archdiocese in San Salvador.”

The search went on until noon on Dec. 4, when a farmer told his pastor that he had been forced to bury “four unidentified white women.” We “flew” in Paul’s jeep to the very concealed area where they were reported buried. Then came the painful extraction of the four—piled one on top of the other. Jean was first, her lovely face destroyed. Dorothy had a tranquil look. Maura’s face was serene but seemed to utter a silent cry, and last little Ita. I went forward to wipe the dirt from her cheek and place her arm at her side. We Sisters fell to our knees in reverence. I felt it a Resurrection moment. Yes, their dead and abused bodies were there, but I knew their souls were with their loving Saviour.

Annually, on Dec. 2 the churchwomen are celebrated with liturgies, dramas and processions. In the United States works named for the four women aid underprivileged students and adults. In El Salvador a project for women and children with healthy agricultural training bears their names—as do many young women. They live, and I can only thank God for having known, loved and appreciated these wonderful women, and their total self gift. “

*Music: “El Salvador” by Vin Garbutt*

### **Sister Dorothy Stang**

Sister Dorothy was originally from Dayton, Ohio, where she attended Julianne High School. It was while she was a student that she decided to become a nun and when she left school she joined the convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Cincinnati. The order, founded in France in the early 18th century by Marie Rose Julie Billiart, works for social justice. Its mission statement dedicates the order to “take our stand with poor people especially women and children, in the most abandoned places”. Dorothy’s beliefs took her to Brazil in the 1960s and it was there, in the vast Para region, which encompasses large tracts of rainforest, that she found her calling - despite the obvious dangers she faced. She began her ministry in Brazil in 1966, in Coroata in the state of Maranhao. The town of Anapu, on the edge of the Amazon rainforest, is most notable for the dust that clogs its streets and for the number of shops selling chain-saws. It is also the place that Sister Dorothy called home for more than 30 years and where she organised her efforts to try to protect the rainforest and its people from disastrous and often illegal exploitation by logging firms and ranchers. A citizen of Brazil and the United States, Sister Dorothy worked with the Pastoral Land Commission, an organization of the Catholic Church that fights for the rights of rural workers and peasants, and defends land reforms in Brazil. Her death came less than a week after meeting with the country's human rights officials about threats to local farmers from loggers and landowners.

Sister Dorothy Stang lived among those who wanted her dead. She was in the Boa Esperanca settlement when she was killed while travelling with two peasants to a meeting to discuss a

settlement for the area, which has apparently been granted to peasants by the federal government but which is sought by loggers. On February 12 2005, when they finally came for her she read passages from the Bible to her killers. They listened for a moment, then fired.

Sister Dorothy was shot six times in the head, throat and body at close range by two gunmen at a remote encampment in the jungle about 30 miles from the town. Her body was found face down in the mud, blood staining the back of her white blouse. "She was on a list of people marked for death. And little by little they're ticking those names off the list," said Nilde Sousa, an official with a local women's group who worked with the nun. The two men travelling with her escaped unhurt and may be able to identify the killers to police, reports suggest. While the suspects' names have not yet been released, Sister Dorothy's supporters say there is little doubt as to who was responsible. While the local people called her Dora or "the angel of the Trans-Amazonian", loggers and other opponents called her a "terrorist" and accused of supplying guns to the peasants. The Pastoral Land Commission of the Roman Catholic Church, which she worked for, said in a statement: "The hatred of ranchers and loggers respects nothing. The reprehensible murder of our sister brings back to us memories of a past that we had thought was closed. She knew she was on the death list. She said she would be protected because of her age and because she was a nun - she was wrong,".

### **Malala Yousafzai**

Malala Yousafzai, born on 12 July 1997 is a Pakistani school pupil and education activist from the town of Mingora in the Swat District of Pakistan's northwest. She is known for her activism for rights to education and for women, especially in the Swat Valley, where the Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. In early 2009, at the age of 11–12, Yousafzai wrote a blog under a pseudonym for the BBC detailing her life under Taliban rule, their attempts to take control of the valley, and her views on promoting education for girls. The following summer, a *New York Times* documentary was filmed about her life as the Pakistani military intervened in the region, culminating in the Second Battle of Swat. Yousafzai rose in prominence, giving interviews in print and on television, and she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by South African activist Desmond Tutu. On 9 October 2012, Yousafzai was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus. In the days immediately following the attack, she remained unconscious and in critical condition, but later her condition improved enough for her to be sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, England, for intensive rehabilitation. On 12 October, a group of 50 Islamic clerics in Pakistan issued a fatwā, or death threat, against those who tried to kill her, but the Taliban reiterated its intent to kill Yousafzai and her father.

The assassination attempt sparked a national and international outpouring of support for Yousafzai. It was said that she may have become "the most famous teenager in the world." On 12 July 2013, Yousafzai spoke at the UN to call for worldwide access to education, and in September 2013 she officially opened the Library of Birmingham. *I Am Malala*, Malala Yousafzai's fearless memoir, co-written with journalist Christina Lamb, begins on Malala's drive home from school on the day she was shot in the head. "Who is Malala?" the young gunman who stopped the school van asked. None of the girls answered. But everyone in the valley knew who Malala was. Ten years old when the Taliban came to the beautiful Swat Valley, once the home of ancient Buddhist kings, 11 years old by the time she had established herself as an international advocate for girls' education in Pakistan, Malala was targeted by

the Taliban for "spreading secularism". She said: "We were learning how to struggle. And we were learning how powerful we are when we speak" Her faith and her duty to the cause of girls' education is unquestionable, her adoration for her father – her role model and comrade in arms – is moving and her pain at the violence carried out in the name of Islam palpable.

Though feted around the globe for her eloquence, intelligence and bravery, Malala is much maligned in Pakistan. She is certainly an ardent critic of the Taliban, but she also speaks passionately against America's drone warfare, the CIA's policy of funding jihadi movements, the violence and abductions carried out by the Pakistani military. *I Am Malala* is as much Malala's father's story as it is his daughter's, and is a touching tribute to his quest to be educated and to build a model school. Malala writes of her father sitting late into the night, cooking and bagging popcorn to sell so that he would have extra income for his project. Yet, even as Malala says she does not hate the man who shot her, in Pakistan anger towards this ambitious young campaigner is as strong as ever. Amid the bile, there is a genuine concern that this extraordinary girl's courageous and articulate message will be stolen by one power or other for its own insidious agendas. It will always be more convenient for the west to paint itself as more righteous, more civilised, than the people they occupy and kill. But now, Malala's fight should be ours too – more inclusion of women, remembrance of the many voiceless and unsung Malalas, and education for all.

## Session 12 – People of Faith Today (B)

So here is the story of three more people of faith. Modern people, people of our own time, people to inspire us and show us that we can do it too. People not afraid to suffer and even to pay the ultimate price for their believing.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a nun who set up her own family of sisters called the Missionaries of Charity to look after the large numbers of people who were dying on the streets of Calcutta, India in the 1950's. In the poorest of the poor, she saw the face of the suffering Jesus and wanted to show him that she loved him.

*Show DVD of Mother Teresa, speaking*

*Read the following text over the film of Jerzy P.*

Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko was a priest in Warsaw, Poland, in the 1980's. It was a very difficult time because the communist government had banned all public gatherings and thrown union members into prison. Fr. Jerzy believed that Jesus was telling him to speak the truth because so many people had been sent to prison for their beliefs. (PAUSE) Thousands of people came to his Masses and he became very popular with everyone except the government. (PAUSE) So one night in October 1984, government agents kidnapped him, beat him and threw him into a reservoir, where he drowned. (PAUSE) He has said: "If I must die violently, it is better to die while defending a worthwhile cause than sitting back, letting injustice take over and refusing to take a stand against it."

*Read the following text over the film of Roger S.*

Brother Roger Schutz was a remarkable man. (PAUSE) Over 60 years ago, he founded the ecumenical community of Taizé in southern France in which a large number of brothers live in community and to which thousands of you people come every year to discover

togetherness in faith and prayer. (PAUSE) Look at his face, and see the peace in it, a peace that comes from living close to God. Could your face ever be like that? Could you be so close to God that his presence shone through you? (PAUSE) One evening in August 2005, while praying with 2,500 people, Brother Roger was stabbed to death by a fanatic. He was very frail and over 90 years old and his blood stained the sanctuary where he had lived and prayed for so many years.

*Wait for the DVD to end*

These are people of faith; we are called to be people of faith too.

### **Prayer**

Here are some words from Mother Teresa:

*A group of people come forward and light candles*

“Don’t search for God in far lands. He is close to you. He is with you. Just keep the lamp burning and you will always see him. Watch and pray. Keep kindling the lamp and you will see his love and you will see how sweet is the Lord you love. Jesus has offered his lifelong, faithful, personal friendship in tenderness and love to each of us. So now by our presence, we put that love into action. Jesus went about doing good. And we are trying to imitate him, because I believe that God loves the world through us. I see so many people on the street, people unwanted, people unloved, uncared for, people hungry for love. They are Jesus. Where are you?”

Here are some of the last words of Fr. Jerzy:

I want you to know that I have only ever lived and stood up for the truth. I want you to tell the world that. And if I must die violently, it is better to die while defending a worthwhile cause than sitting back, letting injustice take over, and refusing to take a stand against it. In the history of Christianity we have many examples showing to what extent truth must be defended – quite simply to the end.

Here are some words from Brother Roger:

*Some Taize music is played under the words*

For those who wish to follow Christ, it can happen that, at first, the ‘yes’ and the ‘no’ wrestle within. One seems to contend with the other. Any choice involves deciding from among various options and it is natural to want to have everything and not give up anything. Why do you hesitate to commit yourself by saying ‘yes’ for your whole life? Perhaps you think that in order to say yes to Christ, great qualities are needed and that you do not have them. Are we aware enough that all of us remain poor? We are Christ’s poor. All of us can say: my faith is weak but the Holy Spirit is present. He will support me to the end; he will make it possible for me to live a beautiful and vast adventure of trust in God and will enable me to commit myself with the same yes with which the Virgin Mary said to God: “let what you have said be done to me.”

## Liturgy 4 – Can we believe today? – Leicester, First Sunday of Advent

### Entry Hymn

1. My soul will glorify the Lord', my spirit will rejoice;  
He's done such wondrous things for me, His praises sing my voice.
2. His mercy is for evermore on those he calls his friends;  
his strength it scatters all the proud, his goodness never ends.
3. The strong and mighty he casts down, the humble lifts up high;  
he feeds the hungry with good things, the greedy passes by.
4. His people he protects in love as promised long ago;  
His word he kept all through the years, his power and grace to show.
5. I'll be your servant from now on, to do your holy will;  
whate'er you ask I will accept, your purpose to fulfil.

### Greeting

#### Introduction *Leicester group*

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Reader 1 | Good afternoon everyone and welcome once again to Leicester for our annual Advent Mass  |
| Reader 2 | We always enjoy having you and look forward very much to your coming each year  |
| Reader 3 | During our Mass today we will be having a special commemoration of the life of Sister Madeleine Campion, who was assistant director of the agency more than 30 years ago and who died in November   |
| Reader 4 | Many of us will remember her with great affection and gratitude and it is only right that we should give thanks for her life and pray for her. We are certain that she would love to know that we had remembered her without too much fuss. |
| Reader 5 | This year, as you know, we have been following the 'Year of Faith'.   |
| Reader 6 | We asked what we thought 'faith' meant and how it affected us   |
| Reader 1 | We looked at people in the Bible who believed in God, like Abraham, Moses and Samuel  |
| Reader 2 | We then thought about what the God we believe in is really like   |
| Reader 3 | We heard what some children thought he was like and also members of our groups  |
| Reader 4 | Then we thought about God as a loving Father, asking what 'love' meant to us and how we thought he loved us   |

Reader 6 Today, as we draw near to the end of our project for this year, we will think about 'people of faith' and what they have to show us, and help us to believe ourselves

Reader 5 Most especially Mary, the mother of Jesus, the 'woman of faith' who put her trust completely in God and agreed to become the mother of his Son

### **Rite of Penance**

Priest For the times we have not believed in you, Lord have mercy

**All Lord have mercy.**

Priest For the times we have refused to believe in you, Christ have mercy.

**All Christ have mercy**

Priest For the times we have abandoned you, Lord have mercy

**All Lord have mercy**

**Prayer** Father in heaven, in this Year of Faith we ask your help and your blessing. Make our faith strong; make our faith loving; make our faith reach out with your message to others all over the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord

### **First Reading** *Scunthorpe Group*

Reader 1 A reading from the first letter of St.John

Reader 2 Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called his children

All And that is what we are

Reader 3 Dear friends, we do not know what the future will be like for us or what will happen to us

Reader 4 What we do know is that we will be like him

All Because we shall see him as he really is. This is the Word of the Lord

**Psalm** Where are you bound, Mary, Mary?

**Gospel** St.Luke – The Story of the Annunciation from "Mother Mary" (DVD)

**Homily** *Hinckley group*

Reader 1 Faith is for people; it is something that people do; it makes a difference to how they live their lives.

Reader 2 It means that they no longer live for themselves but for Jesus and his way.

Reader 3 Jesus is calling each of us to live for him to believe in him, but it is not easy.

- Reader 4 Sometimes we have to change our way of living and that is not easy either, particularly if our friends make fun of us or go away from us.
- Reader 5 Or if we have to really suffer. But people have done this before us and still do today - some we know and countless others we don't know.
- Reader 1 So here is the story of three people of faith. Modern people, people of our own time, people to inspire us and show us that we can do it too.
- Reader 2 People not afraid to suffer and even to pay the ultimate price for their believing.
- Reader 3 Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a nun who set up her own family of sisters called the Missionaries of Charity to look after the large numbers of people who were dying on the streets of Calcutta, India in the 1950's. In the poorest of the poor, she saw the face of the suffering Jesus and wanted to show him that she loved him.

*Show DVD of Mother Teresa, speaking*

*Read the following text over the film of Jerzy P.*

- Reader 4 Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko was a priest in Warsaw, Poland, in the 1980's. It was a very difficult time because the communist government had banned all public gatherings and thrown union members into prison. Fr. Jerzy believed that Jesus was telling him to speak the truth because so many people had been sent to prison for their beliefs. (PAUSE) Thousands of people came to his Masses and he became very popular with everyone except the government. (PAUSE) So one night in October 1984, government agents kidnapped him, beat him and threw him into a reservoir, where he drowned. (PAUSE) He has said: "If I must die violently, it is better to die while defending a worthwhile cause than sitting back, letting injustice take over and refusing to take a stand against it."

*Read the following text over the film of Roger S.*

- Reader 5 Brother Roger Schutz was a remarkable man. (PAUSE) Over 60 years ago, he founded the ecumenical community of Taizé in southern France in which a large number of brothers live in community and to which thousands of you people come every year to discover togetherness in faith and prayer. (PAUSE) Look at his face, and see the peace in it, a peace that comes from living close to God. Could your face ever be like that? Could you be so close to God that his presence shone through you? (PAUSE) One evening in August 2005, while praying with 2,500 people, Brother Roger was stabbed to death by a fanatic. He was very frail and over 90 years old and his blood stained the sanctuary where he had lived and prayed for so many years.

*Wait for the DVD to end*

*Loughborough group*

- Reader 1 These are people of faith; we are called to be people of faith too.

Reader 2 This year, the Year of Faith, we have tried to discover what that really means for us today, and next year we will think about how we can show that faith to others, by following the project that is dedicated to the memory of our dear Sr.Mary David of Loughborough, who once said:

Reader 3 “O no, we’re not saints, dear, just saints in the making”.

**Creed** *Hinckley group*

We have written a creed, that is a statement of our faith, of what we believe (*signed*)

**All We believe in God**

**We believe God made the world and everything in it**

**We believe God is everyone’s Father**

**We believe God made us to know and love him and be his friends**

**We believe in Jesus**

**We believe Jesus is great**

**We believe Jesus is the Son of God**

**We believe Jesus died on the cross for us**

**We believe Jesus rose from the dead**

**We believe Jesus is alive**

**We believe Jesus is with us today and will be always**

**We believe Jesus gives us himself and lives in us through the Holy Spirit**

**We believe Jesus will come again**

**We believe we will meet Jesus in Heaven when we die**

**We believe in the church as the family of God**

**We believe that we are all brothers and sisters throughout the world**

**We believe it is our duty to look after and care for each other**

**We believe that God the Father wants us all to be with him for ever**

**Bidding Prayers** *Derby group*

Priest On this very special day when we are all gathered together, let us turn to our God and ask him to make us strong in faith so that we can show his love to everyone



- Reader 1 Dear God, please help us to know that you love us just as we are today and show us how to love you back.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 2 We thank you for the life and love you have given us, for warm homes and loving families, for health and strength, for energy and enthusiasm. May we use these gifts for you and each other.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 3 Bless SPANNED, and all our groups . May we be excited each day by the new things we can learn about you and your love.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 4 We pray for all who help us to know and learn about you. Guide and protect them in their work.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 5 We pray for those who do not want to believe in you and who make it difficult for others to do so. Open their eyes and their hearts to you, so that they may believe in you as well, and encourage others.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 1 Keep us from just thinking about ourselves, about what we have, how we look and from worrying what other people may think about us. Help us to be confident in your love for us and show us how we may find our lives in looking outwards to those around us.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 2 We pray for all those great people who have tried to show us your way and who now live with you in heaven, and in particular for all our dear friends from SPANNED. May they live with you in peace and happiness for ever.
- Priest Lord hear us
- Reader 3 Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me". We ask her to show us how to be the servants of the Lord too, as we pray with her: Hail Mary
- Reader 4 Let us spend a moment in silence asking our God to strengthen our faith in him

**In loving memory** – a tribute to Sr.Madeleine Campion – *Fr.Frank Daly & Fr.Peter Coyle*

**Offertory Hymn** Let our faith bring you light (*sung to the tune of Eidelweiss*)

1. Let our faith bring you light, serving Jesus together.  
Every day, in his way, living with him for ever.

Light to bring hope in the dark of fear,  
dry your tears and sadness.  
Let our faith bring you light, serving Jesus together

2. Let our joy bring you joy, happiness in the giving;  
Time to share, time to care, and where need be, forgiving.  
Joy to light up all who feel so sad, make them glad and hopeful.  
Let our joy bring you joy, happiness in the giving.

3. We can show how to love, simply, without complication;  
Every day give away, join in life's great celebration.  
Love to reach out to all those in need, no more greed, self-interest.  
Now we're free, just to be like our Saviour for ever.

**Prayer over the gifts** Dear Father in heaven, we bring you this bread, we bring you this wine; we bring you ourselves – all we are at the moment and all that we can be with your help, which you give to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Preface**

God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you for your great love for us. You have given us life and love and the faith to believe in you and your Son. Faith is a gift to be treasured; faith is a gift to be shared; faith is a gift which lifts up our minds and hearts to you; faith is a gift which brings us close to Jesus your Son and he to us. Faith enables us to serve you through him; faith brings us into your eternal presence. And so with all the angels and saints, we praise you as we say:

### **Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

**Communion Hymn** Holy Virgin by God's decree

**After Communion** *Nottingham group*

Reader 1 At the end of this 'Year of Faith' we want to ask ourselves one question:

Reader 2 Can we believe today?

Reader 3 Yes we can – it's not difficult but it's not easy as well

Reader 4 Listen to the stories of all those people who believed from the very beginning a long time before Jesus came

Reader 5 Listen to the stories of Jesus' first friends and how they came to believe in him, and what happened to them because of it

Reader 1 Listen to the stories of the saints through the ages – we'll be thinking a bit more about them next year – and how they came to believe

Reader 2 Listen to the stories we have heard about in our groups of great people of faith today – the Maryknoll sisters, Sr. Dorothy Stang, Mother Teresa, Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko and Bro. Roger

- Reader 3 Think about all those people you know who believe in God and Jesus and how much they have helped and inspire you, especially those in this room with us right now
- Reader 4 And above all, think about Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was the very first person to believe in him, even before he was born
- Reader 5 To believe, we have to be ready to serve, to trust, to change our lives as Mary did when she said: "I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me
- Reader 1 In Hinckley, the parish are following a project called the servant Church, and this prayer has been written for them to help them in their faith. Please say it with us and use your prayer card often during Advent in particular

**All: Loving Father, fill us with your presence in Jesus your Son. May we think with the mind 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.**

### **Blessing**

**Final Hymn** You were chosen by God, for a very great task;  
Willingly you agreed, when eventually asked.  
Look at you now, Mother of his Son,  
Holy and proud, you're the only one to show us how  
To celebrate Christmas now.  
Change your lives just because Jesus came,  
All you do should be done in his name.  
Mother Mary, when the angel came,  
My my, how could you resist him?  
Mother Mary, with some news to tell,  
From God, he was so insistent.  
You gave the world its Saviour, changed us in our behaviour;  
You, you taught us how to live and love.  
Mother Mary, now we really know, you, you taught us how to live and love.

For a Saviour to come we've been waiting so long;  
Trying to get things right, but we've got it all wrong;  
Selfish and proud, not the humble way,  
Raucous and loud, from his path we stray every day,  
In all that we think and say.  
Give away everything that you have, living's not about what you can grab.  
Mother Mary, when the angel came,  
My my, how could you resist him?

Mother Mary, with some news to tell,  
From God, he was so insistent.  
You've shown the truth in living, is to be found in giving,  
Now, now, how we love and honour you

Mother Mary, when the angel came,  
 My my, how could you resist him?  
 Mother Mary, with some news to tell,  
 From God, he was so insistent.  
 Mother Mary, when the angel came,  
 My my, how could you resist him?  
 Mother Mary, with some news to tell,  
 From God, he was so insistent.  
 You've shown the truth in living, is to be found in giving,  
 Now, now, how we love and honour you.  
 Mother Mary, now we really know,  
 How much we should love and honour you.

### **Session 13 – “So that you may believe...”**

#### **What we have seen and heard we are telling you – the witness of ‘tradition’**

This last session takes place in Advent and helps us to draw together the strands of the year's project as well as preparing for Christmas. We can use some of the hymns from the Leicester Mass and create a prayerful setting for the session to take place.

The history of God's church, his family, is full of stories of people who believed in him and in Jesus his Son, and this was the reason that the gospels were written:

Luke 1:1-4 – Luke carefully goes over the whole story to prove that it is true to show the governor Theophilus (which means ‘Lover of God’) ‘how well founded is the teaching you received’

John 20:30-31 -At the end of St.John's gospel he tells us why he wrote it: “there were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing this you may have life through his name”

1 Jn.1:4 This is echoed in the beautiful First Letter of St.John, when he tells us that what ‘we’, ie. the disciples of Jesus, have ‘seen and heard, we are telling you, so that you too may be in union with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ. It may be expressed in a piece of choral speaking thus:

Voice 1        This is what we have heard from him and the message that we are announcing to you.

Both            God is light; there is no darkness in him at all

Voice 2        What we have seen and heard we are telling you

Voice 1        So that you too may be in union with us, as we are in union with the Father

Both            and with his Son, Jesus Christ

Voice 2        What we have seen and heard - the light that comes from God

Voice 1      The light that was at the beginning of time

Voice 2      The light that is, and ever will be

Both          The light that is Jesus, the Saviour of the world

Voice 1      For two thousand years people have seen and heard

Voice 2      have lived and died by what they have seen and heard

Voice 1      Martyrs and saints, and ordinary people have seen and heard and lived

Both          So it has been and so it yet can be

Voice 2      For two thousand years

Voice 1      and into this Millennium and beyond

Voice 2      What we have seen and heard is what we are telling you

Both          We are telling you that Jesus Christ is Lord of light

Voice 1      that he was born among us on Christmas Day

Voice 2      that he died and rose again from the dead

Voice 1      that he has brought us out of darkness by his loving

Voice 2      that he is offering new life to all who will accept him

Both          to all who will accept him

Voice 1      Like others before us, we come seeking light for ourselves

Voice 2      that we may light the way for others

Voice 1      renewing our faith, so that wherever trust is dimmed and fear casts a shadow

Voice 2      we may reflect Christ's light of love amongst those with whom we live

Voice 1      for what we know and what we have come to believe

Voice 2      and what we proclaim today and every day

Both          is that Jesus Christ is Lord, yesterday, today and for ever

For Our Lord, however, it was not enough that his first followers believed in him. He wanted them to tell everyone else everywhere about him and to bring more people into his family, the Church.

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16 – Jesus' last words to his friends: 'go therefore and make disciples of all the nations'

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This 'mission' is given to all of us who believe in God the Father and Jesus his Son: to tell the 'Good News' of Jesus to everyone so that they and all of us 'may have life through his name'

**THANKS BE TO GOD**

## Appendix – full text on ‘women of faith’



### Remembering the martyrs 30 years later

Maryknoll Sister Madeline Dorsey, who served in El Salvador at the time, reflects on those harrowing days and the deaths of her friends and colleagues.

By Madeline M. Dorsey, M.M.



The year was 1980 and El Salvador was beginning a 12-year civil war between leftist rebels seeking social and land reform and right-wing government militias suppressing them. Some 1 million people were displaced and 75,000 killed. Among the dead were churchworkers targeted as subversives because they were aiding the poor. Maryknoll Sister Madeline Dorsey, who served in El Salvador at the time, reflects on those harrowing days and the deaths of her friends and colleagues.



The memory of the events of 1980 will always be painful yet beautiful, as the faith of our loved ones who died speaks out to us even today.

That I survived will always remain a mystery to me. I was working with the poor and could very well have met death like my colleagues. No other Maryknoll Sister knew El Salvador's complexities nor understood up close the government's undeclared war on its own poor people as I did, having witnessed so much violence in the year I was alone serving 8,000 people in a poor colony in the Santa Ana Diocese. The newly founded death squad would come during the night and take away our youth and often their fathers. The poor, the youth and those working to help them meet their faith needs and basic economic necessities became the endangered species.

Lucky for me, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and Lay Missioner Jean Donovan, both on the Cleveland mission team, were serving an hour and a half away in La Libertad. They worried about me being alone. Jean would call and insist I not skip one of our regularly scheduled prayer/play days.

In 1979 when the Maryknoll Sisters leadership team asked for volunteers to join us in El Salvador, Carla Piette, Ita Ford, Terry Alexander and Maura Clarke responded.

Carla arrived at the very moment Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot at the Offertory of his Mass on March 24. The shock was beyond description, not only in El Salvador but worldwide. Archbishop Romero had repeatedly denounced the violence. Now the voice of the poor was silenced.

Terry Alexander joined us for the archbishop's burial on Palm Sunday and Ita arrived a short time later to work with Carla in Chalatenango.

Death struck Carla first, on Aug. 23. Ita had waited for Carla—gifted, lively, strong, funny—the only driver of the only jeep they had, to return from her work. It was the rainy season and the river might rise suddenly as they were returning a freed government prisoner to his home. Forging the river, the jeep was knocked over. Before drowning herself, Carla pushed Ita free. Ita, serious but with a dry sense of humor, was devastated by Carla's death.



Maura generously joined Ita in the archdiocesan social work for internally endangered and displaced refugees. Gentle, thoughtful Maura, in El Salvador only three-and-a-half months, would go to her martyrdom with Ita, Dorothy and Jean.

Before going to our Maryknoll Sisters meeting in Nicaragua at Thanksgiving time, I sent a cable to Ita and Maura saying Terry and I would try to come back on the flight with them, since dangers were heightened with the recent murder of six Democratic leaders in San Salvador. Unfortunately the flight couldn't be arranged.

When Terry and I arrived at El Salvador's airport, our dear friends, Dorothy, known as "an Alleluia from head to toe," and Jean were there to pick us up. They talked about their dinner at the home of U.S. Ambassador Robert White the night before. We told them Ita and Maura were coming on a later flight and would get to La Libertad by taxi, but they insisted on going back to the airport to pick them up.

Now I share our death, entombment and resurrection story, which is the only way I can think of those days of their being missing, the long search through prayer, phone calls, contact with Church and governments.

On Dec. 3 in mid-morning Father Paul Schindler, head of the Cleveland mission team, called Terry through our telephone-telegram office in Santa Ana to ask: "Where are the girls?" Jean and Dorothy were expected at a parish meeting and Paul had already checked with the Asunción Sisters in San Salvador and Chalatenango. He asked us to come to La Libertad to help in the search.

As Terry and I surveyed the burned up minibus the missionaries had driven, a man said, "This is the work of the guerrillas." I promptly replied: "The opposition would never harm missionaries who are helping feed the hungry women and children caught in the fighting in the hills, and getting the little ones and the aged to refugee centers set up by the Archdiocese in San Salvador."



The search went on until noon on Dec. 4, when a farmer told his pastor that he had been forced to bury "four unidentified white women." We "flew" in Paul's jeep to the very concealed area where they were reported buried.

Then came the painful extraction of the four—piled one on top of the other. Jean was first, her lovely face destroyed. Dorothy had a tranquil look. Maura's face was serene but seemed to utter a silent cry, and last little Ita. I went forward to wipe the dirt from her cheek and place her arm at her side. We Sisters fell to our knees in reverence. I felt it a Resurrection moment. Yes, their dead and abused bodies were there, but I knew their souls were with their loving Savior.

Annually, on Dec. 2 the churchwomen are celebrated with liturgies, dramas and processions. In the United States works named for the four women aid underprivileged students and adults. In El Salvador a project for women and children with healthy agricultural training bears their names—as do many young women.



They live, and I can only thank God for having known, loved and appreciated these wonderful women, and their total self gift.

***Sister Madeline Dorsey from Brooklyn, N.Y., now 92 years old, lives at the Maryknoll Sisters center in New York***

# Ita Ford

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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**Sister Ita Ford, M.M.**



<b>Born</b>	April 23, 1940 <u>Brooklyn, New York,</u> <u>United States</u>
<b>Died</b>	December 2, 1980 <u>El Salvador</u>
<b>Cause of death</b>	<u>murder</u> by military <u>death squad</u>
<b>Resting place</b>	<u>Chalatenango, El Salvador</u>

<b>Nationality</b>	<u>American</u>
<b>Occupation</b>	<u>Maryknoll</u> Missionary Sister
<b>Religion</b>	<u>Roman Catholic</u>
<b>Parents</b>	William P. Ford, Sr., & Mildred Teresa O'Beirne
<b>Relatives</b>	<u>William P. Ford, Jr.</u> , (brother) & Bishop <u>Francis Xavier Ford</u> , M.M.

Sister **Ita Ford**, M.M. (April 23, 1940 – December 2, 1980) was a Roman Catholic Maryknoll Sister who served as a missionary in Bolivia, Chile and El Salvador. She worked with the poor and war refugees. On December 2, 1980, she was tortured, raped, and murdered, along with fellow missionaries Sister Maura Clarke, M.M., laywoman Jean Donovan, and Sister Dorothy Kazel, O.S.U. They were killed in El Salvador by members of a military death squad of the right-wing Salvadoran military-led government.

## Life and work

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 23, 1940, Ford was the daughter of William Patrick Ford, an insurance man who took early retirement due to tuberculosis, and Mildred Teresa O'Beirne Ford, a public-school teacher. She had an older brother, Bill (1936–2008), and a younger sister, Irene. The family lived at 1029 57th Street in Brooklyn. William Patrick Ford was related to Austin B. Ford, whose son, Francis Xavier Ford (1892–1952), was the first seminarian to apply to the newly established Maryknoll Fathers in 1911 and, after being ordained as a missionary in 1917, went to China, where he became a bishop and a martyr. He died in a Communist prison camp there in 1952, when his young "cousin" Ita was twelve. Though her mother taught in the public school system, Ita Ford was educated in parochial schools, beginning at age five in the Visitation Academy in Bay Ridge, run by the Visitation Sisters, a semi-cloistered order. She attended Fontbonne Hall Academy, a high school operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, where she worked on the school newspaper.<sup>[1]</sup> Finally, from 1957 to 1961, she attended Marymount Manhattan College, founded by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. (Marymount Manhattan split from its mother school, Marymount College, in 1961).

Following in her relative the Bishop's footsteps, Ford had confided in a high school friend at the age of fifteen that she not only wanted to be a nun, she specifically felt called to be a Maryknoll missionary sister. Even before her college graduation in 1966, Ford had a vocational counselor advising her about her fitness for Maryknoll. She entered the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic at the age of twenty-one. Three years later, due to ill health, she had to leave the formation program. After working seven years as an editor at a publishing company, Ford reapplied and was again accepted by the Maryknoll Sisters in 1971. After

serving briefly in Bolivia in 1972, she moved to Chile a short time before the military coup there on September 11, 1973. Ford lived in a poor shantytown with Sister Carla Piette, M.M., in Santiago, where they ministered to the needs of the people, especially those who lived in poverty. After spending a required "reflection year" in the United States, 1978–1979, before taking permanent religious vows in March 1980, Ford moved with Piette from Chile to El Salvador, arriving the day of Óscar Romero's funeral. In June of that year, they began working with the Emergency Refugee Committee in Chalatenango. In this mission, Ford worked with the poor and war victims, providing food, shelter, transportation and burial.

After the death of Sister Carla in a flash flood on August 23, 1980—a flood which nearly cost Ford her own life, saved only by Piette's help in pushing her from the overwhelmed vehicle—Ford was joined on the mission by Maura Clarke, a Maryknoll sister who was already in El Salvador in contemplation of a mission assignment. Altogether, Piette and Ford had worked together in Chile and El Salvador for seven years, until their deaths barely three months apart on December 2, 1980.

## **Murder**

In November 1980, Ford and Clarke attended a regional assembly of Maryknoll Sisters in Nicaragua. At the closing liturgy on December 1, 1980, Ford read a passage from one of Archbishop Óscar Romero's final homilies:

"Christ invites us not to fear persecution because, believe me, brothers and sisters, the one who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor, and in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear, be tortured, to be held captive - and to be found dead."

The following day, December 2, 1980, Ford and Clarke boarded a plane to return to El Salvador. They were picked up by missionaries Dorothy Kazel, an Ursuline sister and Jean Donovan, a Roman Catholic laywoman. Several members of the National Guard stopped the vehicle they were driving after they left the airport in San Salvador. The four women were taken to a relatively isolated spot where they were tortured, raped, and murdered by the soldiers.

## **Subsequent history**

According to the Maryknoll Sisters: "The U.N.-sponsored report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador concluded that the abductions were planned in advance and the men responsible had carried out the murders on orders from above. It further stated that the head of the National Guard and two officers assigned to investigate the case had concealed the facts to harm the judicial process. The murder of the women, along with attempts by the Salvadoran military and some American officials to cover it up, generated a grass-roots opposition in the U.S., as well as ignited intense debate over the Administration's policy in El Salvador. In 1984, the defendants were found guilty and sentenced to 30 years in prison. The Truth Commission noted that this was the first time in Salvadoran history that a judge had found a member of the military guilty of assassination. In 1998, three of the soldiers were released for good behavior. Two of the men remain in prison and have petitioned the Salvadoran government for pardons." Ita Ford's brother, attorney William P. Ford, spent more than 25 years using the U.S. court system to try to obtain justice for his sister and the

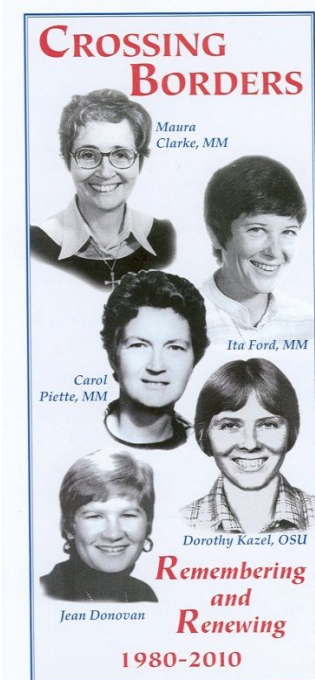
other three murdered women. He worked closely with Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) on federal lawsuits to try to bring Salvadoran generals to answer for the murder of the women, and, in other cases, for the torture and murder of members of the Salvadoran poor. The head of the National Guard, whose troops were responsible for the murders, Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, went on to become Minister of Defense in the government of José Napoleón Duarte.<sup>[3]</sup> After their emigration to the American state of Florida, Vides Casanova and his fellow General, José Guillermo Garcia, were the named defendants in a federal civil suit brought by Bill Ford on his sister's behalf. The case is styled *Ford v. Garcia*. The defense won the case.

## Further reading

- *Hearts on Fire: The Story of the Maryknoll Sisters*, Penny Lernoux, et al., Orbis Books, 1995.
- *Ita Ford: Missionary Martyr*, Phyllis Zagano, Paulist Press, 1996.
- *The Same Fate As the Poor*, Judith M. Noone, Orbis Books, 1995.
- *Witness of Hope: The Persecution of Christians in Latin America*, Martin Lange and Reinhold Iblacker, Orbis Books, 1981.

## Maryknoll commemorates El Salvador Martyrs

15 November 2010, 3:06 pm by [Marcela Rojas](#) in [Ossining](#) - [2 Comments](#)



Maryknoll will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the El Salvador Martyrs on Nov. 28:

The night of December 2, 1980, two Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford arrived at the airport in San Salvador from a Maryknoll community meeting in Nicaragua. There to take them home were two women from the Cleveland Mission team working in La Libertad, Ursaline Sr. Dorothy Kazel and Lay Missioner Jean Donovan. Their van was stopped at a

road block by National Guardsmen. The women were taken to a remote area, abused and murdered. Their bodies were buried in a common grave by a farmer compelled by the Guardsmen. This year on Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup> the memory of these women and the thousands of Salvadorans who also lost their lives will be commemorated at the Maryknoll Sisters Center in Ossining, New York. Included in this remembrance will be Sr. Carol (Carla) Piette, another Maryknoll Sister who worked with Ita Ford in Chile and preceded her to El Salvador arriving the day Archbishop Romero was assassinated. Sisters Carla and Ita were together in a jeep caught by a flash flood while crossing a river bed August 23, 1980. Carla pushed Ita to safety but was herself drowned. The two Sisters had been working with refugees and displaced people in the region of Chalatenango in NE rural El Salvador during the undeclared civil war. The people of the Barrio where Carla's body was found refer to her as a "Martyr of Charity" and honor her on the anniversary of her death each year. After Carla's death, Sr. Maura Clark came from Nicaragua to take her place working with Ita.

On March 24 of 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero y Damas was gunned down while celebrating Mass in the Hospital of Divine Providence chapel. The day before in his Sunday homily he had appealed to the National Guard and the police not to kill their fellow brothers and sisters. "No soldier is obliged to obey an order against the law of God," he said. "No one has to fulfill an immoral law. It is time... to obey your consciences rather than the order of sin." The Maryknoll Sisters as well as the Cleveland Mission Team had come to El Salvador in response to the Archbishop's call to Sisters for help in a situation of extreme oppression and violence experienced by the Church and by the suffering people. After the deaths of Romero and the Church Women, the brutal repression continued. Nine years later in 1989, six Jesuit priests teaching at University of Central America (UCA) together with their housekeeper and her daughter were dragged out of their residence and slain in their garden.

Sunday's celebration on the 28th will begin with a morning Eucharistic Liturgy in the Chapel. In the afternoon there will be a dramatic presentation of the *Affording Hope Project* by the artist and dancer Teyvyn East. East who was influenced by a year spent researching and working for the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns in Washington D.C. was inspired to explore social injustice in the world by using creative techniques of song, dance & drama to critique systemic injustice and be a catalyst for personal & political transformation. She has spent 6 months touring the nation with her one-woman show that moves from biblical stories to environmental commentary, from the personal to the national & global.

The theme for this year's commemoration of the deaths of the El Salvador Martyrs is 'Crossing Borders', in remembrance of all the borders the Women crossed as they followed the call to be missionaries, including the final border of heroic death. We will remember as well all the people forced to migrate from place to place because of injustice and war. Lastly, we will draw upon the insights of the past to strengthen us as we stand at new frontiers today. In addition to this event, other Commemorative celebrations of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary are being held in El Salvador, December 2-4, and in Washington D.C. on January 6, 2011. Overall Coordinator for these events is Sr. Ann Braudis M.M. of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.



## About Sister Dorothy Stang

Sister Dorothy, 73, was born in Dayton, Ohio, one of nine children. She was raised on a farm in a traditional Catholic family. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur community in 1948 and professed final vows in 1956. From 1951 to 1966 she taught elementary classes at St. Victor School in Calumet City, IL, St. Alexander School in Villa Park, IL and Most Holy Trinity School in Phoenix, Az. She began her ministry in Brazil in 1966, in Coroata in the state of Maranhao.

A citizen of Brazil and the United States, Sister Dorothy worked with the Pastoral Land Commission, an organization of the Catholic Church that fights for the rights of rural workers and peasants, and defends land reforms in Brazil. Her death came less than a week after meeting with the country's human rights officials about threats to local farmers from loggers and landowners.

Before her murder, Sister Dorothy was named 'Woman of the Year' by the state of Para for her work in the Amazon region. She also received the Humanitarian of the Year award from the Brazilian Bar Association for her work helping the local rural workers.

Since her death, Sister Dorothy has been widely honored for her life and work by the United States Congress and by a number of colleges and universities across the United States. She was posthumously awarded the 2008 United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights. Books, movies, documentaries and an opera have been developed about her. And she was formally recognized by the Vatican as a modern day martyr.

## The Life and Brutal Death of Sister Dorothy, a Rainforest Martyr

by Andrew Buncombe

Sister Dorothy Stang lived among those who wanted her dead. When they finally came for her she read passages from the Bible to her killers. They listened for a moment, then fired. Her body was found face down in the mud, blood staining the back of her white blouse.

The town of Anapu, on the edge of the Amazon rainforest, is most notable for the dust that clogs its streets and for the number of shops selling chain-saws. It is also the place that Sister Dorothy called

home for more than 30 years and where she organised her efforts to try to protect the rainforest and its people from disastrous and often illegal exploitation by logging firms and ranchers. Now Anapu will be known as the place where Sister Dorothy is buried.

The 74-year-old activist was laid to rest yesterday morning after being assassinated by two gunmen on Saturday at a remote encampment in the jungle about 30 miles from the town. Sister Dorothy - the most prominent activist to be murdered in the Amazon since Chico Mendez in 1988 - was shot six times in the head, throat and body at close range. "She was on a list of people marked for death. And little by little they're ticking those names off the list," said Nilde Sousa, an official with a local women's group who worked with the nun.



People walk 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) on the transamazonian highway carrying the coffin containing the body of American missionary Dorothy Stang from the airport to the Santas Missoes Church (Holy Missions Church) where Stang's wake took place in Anapu, northern Brazil, Monday, Feb. 14, 2005. Stang was gunned down Saturday Feb. 12, 2005, at the Boa Esperanca settlement where she worked with some 400 poor families near Anapu, a rural town about 1,300 miles (2,100 kilometers) north of Rio de Janeiro. (AP Photo/Paulo Santos)

As with the death of Mr Mendez, a rubber tapper, the murder of Sister Dorothy has triggered waves of outrage among environmental and human rights activists who say she dedicated her life to helping the area's poor, landless peasants and confronting the businesses that see the rainforest only as a resource to be plundered and which have already destroyed 20 per cent of its 1.6 million square miles.

It has also highlighted the problem for the Brazilian government of balancing a desire to protect the rainforest with pressure to open tracts of forest to support strong economic growth as demanded by the International Monetary Fund, which loaned Brazil billions of dollars following a recession in 2002. Such a conflict of interests has hindered attempts by the authorities to fulfil the promise of the left-leaning President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to find homes for 400,000 landless families. The promise is badly off target and showing no signs of rapid improvement.

The President immediately ordered a full-scale investigation into Sister Dorothy's death and dispatched two members of his cabinet to the region, an area that is notorious for violence, crime and slave labour. One of those who was sent, Nilmario Miranda, the government's secretary for human rights, said before setting off: "Solving this crime and apprehending those who ordered and committed it is a question of honour for us. This is intolerable."

Sister Dorothy was in the Boa Esperanca settlement when she was killed. She was travelling with two peasants to a meeting to discuss a settlement for the area, which has apparently been granted to peasants by the federal government but which is sought by loggers. The two men travelling with her escaped unhurt and may be able to identify the killers to police, reports suggest.

While the suspects' names have not yet been released, Sister Dorothy's supporters say there is little doubt as to who was responsible. While the local people called her Dora or "the angel of the Trans-Amazonian", loggers and other opponents called her a "terrorist" and accused of supplying guns to the peasants. The Pastoral Land Commission of the Roman Catholic Church, which she worked for, said in a statement: "The hatred of ranchers and loggers respects nothing. The reprehensible murder of our sister brings back to us memories of a past that we had thought was closed."

Sister Dorothy was originally from Dayton, Ohio, where she attended Julianne High School. It was while she was a student that she decided to become a nun and when she left school she joined the convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Cincinnati. The order, founded in France in the early 18th century by Marie Rose Julie Billiard, is an proponent of liberation theology and social justice. Its mission statement dedicates the order to "take our stand with poor people especially



women and children, in the most abandoned places".

Her beliefs took her to Brazil in the 1960s and it was there, in the vast Para region, which encompasses large tracts of rainforest, that she found her calling - despite the obvious dangers she faced. Just two weeks ago, Sister Dorothy met Mr Miranda, the human rights secretary, and told him of the death threats that she and others had received and asked for the government's help and protection.

Sister Elizabeth Bowyer, a senior nun at the Cincinnati convent, said yesterday that she believed Sister Dorothy may have realised she was going to be killed at some point even though she told her friends and colleagues that her status as a nun would offer a level of protection. "She knew she was on the death list. She said she would be protected because of her age and because she was a nun - she was wrong," she said. "We don't know who hired the gunmen but we know the loggers and ranchers were very upset by what she was doing. She was working with the human rights people to protect the small farmers who have been given the right to the land."

The stakes could not have been higher. Greenpeace estimates that 90 per cent of the timber in Para is illegally logged. The danger of speaking out against such exploitation could barely have been greater. Campaigners say Para has the country's highest rate of deaths related to land battles. Greenpeace said that more than 40 per cent of the murders between 1985 and 2001 were related to such disputes.

The Brazilian human rights group Justica Global said 73 rural workers were murdered in 2003 - 33 of them in Para. Last year 53 were killed. Of those, 19 were killed in Para.

"The government is simply not giving adequate protection," said the group's director, Sandra Carvalho. "We think its actions in the region are extremely weak. The government put together a programme to deal with these problems but it is being carried out at such a slow pace. The government has not managed to carry out the land reforms it spelt out before coming to power. What they have done is far below what we anticipated." She added: "There is constant conflict with very few convictions because there is a culture of impunity. Generally these conflicts involve landowners and landless rural workers ... Dora was killed because she stood up to these people."

And yet this fight appeared to energise the sprightly 74-year-old. Samuel Clements, 24, a student filmmaker from Britain who spent the summer of 2003 filming Sister Dorothy's work, said she seemed to become a different, more animated person once she left dusty Anapu and travelled into the jungle to meet with the small farmers and peasants. In addition to fighting to preserve the rainforest she was helping encourage small-scale, sustainable agriculture.

In a recent letter to Mr Clements, she wrote: "Our forest is being overtaken by the others daily ... Together we can make a difference."

Mr Clements also believed Sister Dorothy may have had a premonition of the fate that awaited her and yet she still looked for the best in people. "She said once 'Humanity is like a fruit bowl, with all the different fruit - black, white and yellow - so different and yet all part of it'. She had incredible energy even though she was fighting incredible battles," he said.

Lúcio Flavio Pinto, an investigative journalist in the region who produces a weekly newspaper, Jornal Pessoal, knew Sister Dorothy since the 1970s. He has also been campaigning against the same people she was taking on and has also been on the receiving end of threats. "There were many people who wanted to kill Sister Dorothy," he said yesterday, speaking from the city of Belem, the state capital.

It was to Belem that Sister Dorothy's body was taken on Sunday for a post-mortem examination and where dozens of supporters gathered outside the mortuary singing hymns and holding placards calling for an end to the rampant crime. Claudio Guimaraes, director of the state's forensic science institute, said it appeared that the gunmen were about 18 inches away from Sister Dorothy when they shot her.



In Ohio she was remembered at a series of services which recalled her dedication and courage. "Sister Dorothy in her ministering to the poor remained faithful. We honour those who die for their faith," said Father Dennis Caylor, pastor at St Rafael church in the suburb of Springfield.

And from those who worked with the nun, there were promises that the effort she had undertaken would continue despite her death. Mariana Silva, president of Brazil's National Institute for Settlement and Agrarian Reform said: "We won't step back even one millimetre from our projects in Para because of this. They want to intimidate us but they won't succeed."

*Additional reporting by Tom Phillips and Isabela Caixeta in Belo Horizonte.*

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## Malala Yousafzai

### Malala Yousafzai



<b>Native name</b>	یوسفزی مالاله
<b>Born</b>	12 July 1997 (age 16) <u>Mingora, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan</u>
<b>Residence</b>	<u>Birmingham, England, UK</u>
<b>Nationality</b>	<u>Pakistani</u>
<b>Occupation</b>	<u>Blogger</u> , activist for rights <u>to education</u> and <u>for women</u>

<b>Known for</b>	Activism, <u>Taliban</u> assassination attempt
<b>Religion</b>	<u>Sunni Islam</u>
<b>Relatives</b>	<u>Ziauddin Yousafzai</u> (father)
<b>Awards</b>	<u>Honorary Canadian citizenship</u> <sup>[1]</sup> <u>National Youth Peace Prize</u> <u>Sakharov Prize</u> <u>Simone de Beauvoir Prize</u>

**Malala Yousafzai** was born on 12 July 1997)<sup>[3]</sup> is a Pakistani school pupil and education activist from the town of Mingora in the Swat District of Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. She is known for her activism for rights to education and for women, especially in the Swat Valley, where the Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. In early 2009, at the age of 11–12, Yousafzai wrote a blog under a pseudonym for the BBC detailing her life under Taliban rule, their attempts to take control of the valley, and her views on promoting education for girls. The following summer, a *New York Times* documentary was filmed about her life as the Pakistani military intervened in the region, culminating in the Second Battle of Swat. Yousafzai rose in prominence, giving interviews in print and on television, and she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by South African activist Desmond Tutu.

On 9 October 2012, Yousafzai was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus. In the days immediately following the attack, she remained unconscious and in critical condition, but later her condition improved enough for her to be sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, England, for intensive rehabilitation. On 12 October, a group of 50 Islamic clerics in Pakistan issued a fatwā against those who tried to kill her, but the Taliban reiterated its intent to kill Yousafzai and her father.

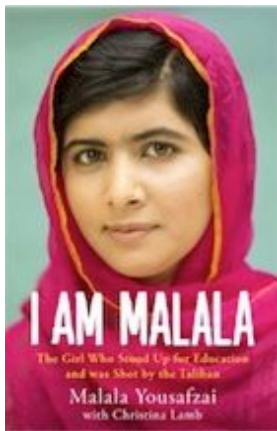
The assassination attempt sparked a national and international outpouring of support for Yousafzai. *Deutsche Welle* wrote in January 2013 that Yousafzai may have become "the most famous teenager in the world."<sup>[4]</sup> United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown launched a UN petition in Yousafzai's name, using the slogan "I am Malala" and demanding that all children worldwide be in school by the end of 2015 – a petition which helped lead to the ratification of Pakistan's first Right to Education Bill.<sup>[5]</sup> In the 29 April 2013 issue of *Time* magazine, Yousafzai was featured on the magazine's front cover and as one of "The 100 Most Influential People in the World". She was the winner of Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize and was nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize (although Yousafzai was widely tipped to win the prize,<sup>[6]</sup> it was awarded to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons). On 12 July 2013, Yousafzai spoke at the UN to call for worldwide access to education, and in September 2013 she officially opened the Library of Birmingham.<sup>[7]</sup> Yousafzai is the recipient of the Sakharov Prize for 2013. On October 16,

2013, the Government of Canada announced its intention that the Parliament of Canada confer Honorary Canadian citizenship upon Yousafzai.

In Arabic, "revolution" is a feminine noun. This is fitting, as without women revolutions are sterile. They have no movement, no life, no sound. Urdu, a distorter of tongues, pilfering as it does from Persian, Hindi, but largely Arabic, uses the masculine word for coup d'etat – *inqilab* – for revolution, rather than the accurate feminine: *thawra*. Perhaps that's why the Taliban were confused. Perhaps that's why they imagined that shooting a 15-year-old girl would somehow enhance their revolution.

## **I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban**

by Malala Yousafzai, Christina Lamb



*I Am Malala*, Malala Yousafzai's fearless memoir, co-written with journalist Christina Lamb, begins on Malala's drive home from school on the day she was shot in the head. "Who is Malala?" the young gunman who stopped the Khushal school van asked. None of the girls answered. But everyone in the valley knew who Malala was. Ten years old when the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan came to the beautiful Swat Valley, once the home of ancient Buddhist kings, 11 years old by the time she had established herself as an international advocate for girls' education in Pakistan, Malala was targeted by the Taliban for "spreading secularism". Ghostwritten books pose a constant difficulty – you are never sure whose voice is leading whose. Malala's voice has the purity, but also the rigidity, of the principled. Whether she is being a competitive teenager and keeping track of who she beat in exams (and by how much) or writing about the blog for the BBC that catapulted her on to the international stage – "We were learning how to struggle. And we were learning how powerful we are when we speak" – or talking about Pakistan's politicians ("useless"), Malala is passionate and intense. Her faith and her duty to the cause of girls' education is unquestionable, her adoration for her father – her role model and comrade in arms – is moving and her pain at the violence carried out in the name of Islam palpable.

It's hardly an exact science, guessing when the ghostwriter's voice takes over from the author's, but in the description, for example, of the scale of Pakistan's devastating 2005 earthquake, the reader is told that the damage "affected 30,000 square kilometres, an area as big as the American state of Connecticut", and the stiff, know-it-all voice of a foreign correspondent resounds. It is Malala who touches the heart of Pakistan's troubles. Speaking of Swat, she writes that it was some 20 years after partition that the Wali of the Valley

renounced his power and brought his kingdom into Pakistan. "So I was born a proud daughter of Pakistan," she writes, "though like all Swatis I thought of myself first as a Swati and Pashtun, before Pakistani." What it means to be from Pakistan – a country of 300 languages, diverse cultures, religions and identities – when real power is restricted to one province is a debate that has always raged in this country. The army and bureaucracy and indeed the functioning power are centralised in the Punjab, while the remaining three provinces – Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pukhtun Khwa – are unequal shareholders in the idea that is Pakistan.

Until power is fairly shared among the four provinces the threat of secession will be a cloud hanging over the country. Malala writes of her beloved father, Ziauddin, wearing a black armband on Pakistan's 50th anniversary "because there was nothing to celebrate since Swat joined Pakistan", presciently foreshadowing a deepening ethnic imbalance so profound that only an extraordinary common enemy could distract from it. The burgeoning power of the Taliban in today's Pakistan should not be much of a surprise to those who understand, as Malala does, the need to redress these ethnic wounds. Though feted around the globe for her eloquence, intelligence and bravery, Malala is much maligned in Pakistan. The haters and conspiracy theorists would do well to read this book. Malala is certainly an ardent critic of the Taliban, but she also speaks passionately against America's drone warfare, the CIA's policy of funding jihadi movements, the violence and abductions carried out by the Pakistani military, feudalism, the barbarous Hudood laws, and even Raymond Davis, the CIA contractor who caused a diplomatic meltdown between America and Pakistan when he killed two Pakistanis in broad daylight in Lahore – "Even we schoolchildren know that ordinary diplomats don't drive around in unmarked cars carrying Glock pistols."

*I Am Malala* is as much Malala's father's story as it is his daughter's, and is a touching tribute to his quest to be educated and to build a model school. Malala writes of her father sitting late into the night, cooking and bagging popcorn to sell so that he would have extra income for his project. She quotes him on all matters – from the ban on *The Satanic Verses* to the environmental problems facing the Swat Valley – and teases him for his long-winded speeches. Yet, even as Malala says she does not hate the man who shot her, here in Pakistan anger towards this ambitious young campaigner is as strong as ever. Amid the bile, there is a genuine concern that this extraordinary girl's courageous and articulate message will be colonised by one power or other for its own insidious agendas. She is young and the forces around her are strong and often sinister when it comes to their designs on the global south. There is a reason we know Malala's story but not that of Noor Aziz, eight years old when killed by a drone strike in Pakistan; Zayda Ali Mohammed Nasser, dead at seven from a drone strike in Yemen; or Abeer Qassim Hamza al Janabi, the 14-year-old girl raped and set on fire by US troops in Mahmudiyah, Iraq. "I wasn't thinking these people were humans," one of the soldiers involved, Steven Green, said of his Iraqi victims.

It will always be more convenient for the west to paint itself as more righteous, more civilised, than the people they occupy and kill. But now, Malala's fight should be ours too – more inclusion of women, remembrance of the many voiceless and unsung Malalas, and education for all.

## **What we have seen and heard we are telling you – the witness of ‘tradition’**

The history of God’s church, his family, is full of stories of people who believed in him and in Jesus his Son, and this was the reason that the gospels were written:

Luke 1:1-4 – Luke carefully goes over the whole story to prove that it is true to show the governor Theophilus (which means ‘Lover of God’) ‘how well founded is the teaching you received’

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16 – Jesus’ last words to his friends: ‘go therefore and make disciples of all the nations’

## **Session 12 – people of faith today**

So here is the story of three people of faith. Modern people, people of our own time, people to inspire us and show us that we can do it too. People not afraid to suffer and even to pay the ultimate price for their believing.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a nun who set up her own family of sisters called the Missionaries of Charity to look after the large numbers of people who were dying on the streets of Calcutta, India in the 1950’s. In the poorest of the poor, she saw the face of the suffering Jesus and wanted to show him that she loved him.

*Show DVD of Mother Teresa, speaking*

*Read the following text over the film of Jerzy P.*

Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko was a priest in Warsaw, Poland, in the 1980’s. It was a very difficult time because the communist government had banned all public gatherings and thrown union members into prison. Fr. Jerzy believed that Jesus was telling him to speak the truth because so many people had been sent to prison for their beliefs. (PAUSE) Thousands of people came to his Masses and he became very popular with everyone except the government.

(PAUSE) So one night in October 1984, government agents kidnapped him, beat him and threw him into a reservoir, where he drowned. (PAUSE) He has said: “If I must die violently, it is better to die while defending a worthwhile cause than sitting back, letting injustice take over and refusing to take a stand against it.”

*Read the following text over the film of Roger S.*

Brother Roger Schutz was a remarkable man. (PAUSE) Over 60 years ago, he founded the ecumenical community of Taize in southern France in which a large number of brothers live in community and to which thousands of you people come every year to discover togetherness in faith and prayer. (PAUSE) Look at his face, and see the peace in it, a peace that comes from living close to God. Could your face ever be like that? Could you be so close to God that his presence shone through you? (PAUSE) One evening in August 2005, while praying with 2,500 people, Brother Roger was stabbed to death by a fanatic. He was very frail and over 90 years old and his blood stained the sanctuary where he had lived and prayed for so many years.

*Wait for the DVD to end*

These are people of faith; we are called to be people of faith too. This year, the Year of Faith, we will try to discover what that really will mean for us today.

## **Liturgy 4 – Can we believe today? – Leicester, First Sunday of Advent**

### **Entry Hymn**

1. My soul will glorify the Lord', my spirit will rejoice;  
He's done such wondrous things for me, His praises sing my voice.
2. His mercy is for evermore on those he calls his friends;  
his strength it scatters all the proud, his goodness never ends.
3. The strong and mighty he casts down, the humble lifts up high;  
he feeds the hungry with good things, the greedy passes by.
4. His people he protects in love as promised long ago;  
His word he kept all through the years, his power and grace to show.
5. I'll be your servant from now on, to do your holy will;  
whate'er you ask I will accept, your purpose to fulfil.

Let our faith bring you light (*sung to the tune of  
'Eidelweiss'*)

1. Let our faith bring you light, serving Jesus together.

Every day, in his way, living with him for ever.

Light to bring hope in the dark of fear,

dry your tears and sadness.

**Psalm**           Where are you bound, Mary, Mary?

**Gospel**           St.Luke – The Story of the Annunciation from “Mother Mary”

### **Homily**

Reader 1

Faith is for people; it is something that people do; it makes a difference to how they live their lives. It means that they no longer live for themselves but for Jesus and his way. Jesus is calling each of us to live for him to believe in him, but it is not easy. Sometimes we have to change our way of living and that is not easy either. Particularly if our friends make fun of us or go away from us. Or if we have to really suffer. But people have done this before us and still do today - some we know and countless others we don't know. So here is the story of three people of faith. Modern people, people of our own time, people to inspire us and show us that we can do it too. People not afraid to suffer and even to pay the ultimate price for their believing. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a nun who set up her own family of sisters called the Missionaries of Charity to look after the large numbers of people who were dying on the streets of Calcutta, India in the 1950's. In the poorest of the poor, she saw the face of the suffering Jesus and wanted to show him that she loved him.

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### **Bidding Prayers**

Priest            On this very special day when we are all gathered together, let us turn to our God and ask him to make us strong in faith so that we can show his love to everyone

Reader           Dear God, please help us to know that you love us just as we are today and show us how to love you back.

Priest            Lord hear us

Reader           We thank you for the life and love you have given us, for warm homes and loving families, for health and strength, for energy and enthusiasm. May we use these gifts for you and each other.

Priest            Lord hear us

Reader           Bless SPANNED, and all our groups . May we be excited each day by the new things we can learn about you and your love.

Priest            Lord hear us

Reader           We pray for all who help us to know and learn about you. Guide and protect them in their work.

Priest            Lord hear us

Reader           We pray for those who do not want to believe in you and who make it difficult for others to do so. Open their eyes and their hearts to you, so that they may believe in you as well, and encourage others.



Priest Lord hear us

Reader Keep us from just thinking about ourselves, about what we have, how we look and from worrying what other people may think about us. Help us to be confident in your love for us and show us how we may find our lives in looking outwards to those around us.

Priest Lord hear us

Reader We pray for all those great people who have tried to show us your way and who now live with you in heaven, and in particular for all our dear friends from SPANNED. May they live with you in peace and happiness for ever.

Priest Lord hear us

Reader Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me". We ask her to show us how to be the servants of the Lord too, as we pray with her: Hail Mary

Let us spend a moment in silence asking our God to strengthen our faith in him

**Offertory Hymn** Let our faith bring you light (*sung to the tune of Eidelweiss'*)

1. Let our faith bring you light, serving Jesus together.  
Every day, in his way, living with him for ever.  
Light to bring hope in the dark of fear,  
dry your tears and sadness.  
Let our faith bring you light, serving Jesus together

2. Let our joy bring you joy, happiness in the giving;  
Time to share, time to care, and where need be, forgiving.  
Joy to light up all who feel so sad, make them glad and hopeful.  
Let our joy bring you joy, happiness in the giving.

3. We can show how to love, simply, without complication;  
Every day give away, join in life's great celebration.  
Love to reach out to all those in need, no more greed, self-interest.  
Now we're free, just to be like our Saviour for ever.