



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

The Synod and Evangelisation: the deep connection

‘WALKING TOGETHER’ has become a frequently used phrase these days as all our parishes muster their efforts to participate as fully as possible in the Synod that Pope Francis has called for. Key words describing the means by which we are to do this are, “listening”, and, “getting alongside”. Now, if we, as Pope Francis has reminded us, are a communion of people in faith, but not a “cosy Club Church”, then our participation in the life of our Church must always have an outward energy, a sense of mission. Through this mission, that always seeks to, “listen and get alongside”, there will always be the potential of sharing the saving message of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. If this is so, then this, “walking together” Synod process cannot be a short term, one-off project but a constant way of being a living Church.

The more I reflect on this, the more I see how evangelisation, when done in a relational and conversational way, is very closely aligned to the Synod principles. One of the vital aspects of our Genesis Method of evangelising that we offer in our diocese, is that, first and foremost the focus is on the other person and not on ourselves. By open conversation and open questions we listen deeply to what the other person wishes to relate and share regarding aspects of their lives and their thinking. Only then do we venture, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to weave into the details of their lived experience, the ways in which the Lord may be working in their lives and drawing them in to the love and truth he has revealed to us for our eternal good.

What a privilege therefore, each of us is being offered, through the Synod, to get alongside and listen to each and any person we may meet, especially, those on the outside of our Church circles. The conversations that may arise could be a vital and life giving experiences for all concerned.



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Fr Jon Bielawski

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Fr Jon continues.....

To become a Synodal Church, a church that is missionary, which truly listens and desires to accompany others in their spiritual journey, we will need to call on the Holy Spirit who is the agent of evangelisation and Jesus's promise to be with us always. The Holy Spirit works through us today just as He did with the first disciples. We are God's hands and feet, continuing Jesus mission on earth. This can seem such a huge task, particularly in the world today, but of course, a loving Father would not give his children an impossible task. Here in our diocese, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have developed a programme that is helping Catholics worldwide to become missionary.

Mission Made Possible is rooted primarily in the art of Soul Listening whilst simultaneously engaging with the Holy Spirit. Soul listening teaches how to listen in to *respond* rather than listening to

react. We learn how to hear the underlying issues, what is being said, but most importantly what is not being said. We listen deeply, to understand a person's experience and their frame of reference so that we can offer the Good News in ways that are relatable and speak directly into their lived situations. The Gospel is life giving and people are transformed by Jesus. He is the solution to all of the world's problems, because He changes hearts. We are agents of His Life and His Change. We carry within us the seeds of complete healing and health and, the ultimate gift of eternal life.

I invite you to read the following testimonies from Mission Made Possible graduates, and then email me to reserve your place in the next round of Mission Made Possible Sessions.

Jonathan.bielawski@predtr.org.uk

'Through the Genesis training, I have realised how important the mission is and the urgency of it in the world we live in.'

'I can already see a change in the way I look at things! I'm looking for opportunities and honing my listening skills'

'I definitely feel more of an awareness and openness and more in tune with the Holy Spirit'



Genesis Mission Training Evaluation—

Summary of Responses –

October 2021.

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE in the UK and abroad have now engaged in the Genesis sessions. The following responses were collected by independent interviewers.

Pilgrims gained confidence, realised their responsibility and the importance, urgency, priority, and ease of evangelisation.

The Genesis training helped me to push myself and grow! I have more confidence to share my faith and am now looking for opportunities and handling them in a different way than I previously thought possible!

The concept of Evangelization was better understood...

In my line of work, I encounter people on a daily basis. The Genesis Mission helped me to see those encounters from a different perspective.

At the start of the Genesis sessions, I was nervous. I thought of the guy we regularly see standing on the corner at Bills games yelling about evangelisation. The video clip helped me to see how easy it is to evangelise. Encountering someone may be simply by asking about their day, but in a way that they know you're truly hearing them. Or it could be that people come to know you as the man of faith they can come to for encouragement.

At the start of the Genesis Mission sessions, I felt hesitant and had no confidence. I wondered what I'd gotten myself into and worried it might be like the Jehovah's Witnesses coming to your door. Then I looked at the video and intro-

'The Genesis Mission has made me a better listener.'

I previously didn't have the tools to know how to respond to help others; but after the Genesis training, I feel I'm helping others better than ever before.

I've already started integrating what I experienced in the Genesis training at the parish by listening to the struggles of others and assuring them of my prayers.

The Genesis training was challenging because I'm a fixer and it's not about fixing the problems of the person but trying to guide them closer to God and let God do the fixing!

duction materials and it eased my mind.

I like that there was no cross talk during the session. It really made me focus in on listening.

Participants came away with practical skills... Training provided pilgrims with tools for accompaniment, most importantly; listening skills.

The Genesis training improved my listening skills, helping me to listen with intent to what others are saying.

When talking to people who said they had "no belief" in the past, I would only listen. Now I feel better equipped to accompany people, giving them hope and something to latch on to.

Participants grew personally...

Pilgrims gained confidence and a sense of purpose as they recognised their identity & mission.

I experienced tremendous growth from participating. I was seeking knowledge, but this refocused and equipped me with a sense of purpose.

Prior to the Genesis training, I had a desire to grow more in my faith and I now feel I'm growing at a steady, continued pace. I've been paying more attention to my faith and to having God in my life.

St Teresa's Prayer

*Christ has no body on
earth but yours;
No hands but yours;
No feet but yours;
Yours are the eyes
Through which he is to
look out
Christ's compassion to the
world;*

'I feel more confident to have faith conversations with others.'

'I can see the positive effect this will have as it ripples out into our parish'

"Please pray for the Genesis Mission"





The Genesis Mission helped participants grow in holiness...

Pilgrims experienced a deeper connection to the Holy Spirit, a richer understanding of those around them and renewed appreciation for our Catholic faith, through prayer, Mass and the Sacraments.

I loved the Genesis training! It made me think about others and think of Jesus as a person, a friend, someone we can all relate to. I'm developing a personal relationship with Jesus because of the Genesis training!

The Genesis Mission training challenged me in how I approach my own faith giving me daily reminders to pray and be a disciple and model for my family. It challenged me to put God first.

I now have a deeper appreciation for the sacraments, getting to daily mass, adoration, and reconciliation. It solidified a change to my thinking.

The Genesis Mission is applicable to other areas of life, especially parish life...

Pilgrims found Genesis to be a community-builder and applicable to all aspects of their lives.

The Genesis training has made me much more aware of everyone and everything around me. I now look at people and circumstances differently, recognizing my own behaviors and who I really want to be for others: A kinder, more compassionate, and thoughtful person who is aware of how others think and feel and can talk about God without preaching.

Little by little the parish is coming back to life. The Genesis Mission has helped me to meet people where they are and made me aware of the need to be more intentional about taking the mission a little further.

I'm integrating the Genesis training into every aspect of my life, not just at St. Rose. It's now more natural for me to bring religion into the conversation, whereas before I was much too nervous. It's taught me to really be positive and engaging with others.

Through the Genesis training, I've noticed interactions in the parish in a different way. I now see us as a community and that makes me want to get involved !more!



'Be the Gospel for someone'.

If you want to know how to share your faith with friends, family or to whomever God sends to you, please get in touch with the team.

On a Scale of 1-10 with 10 being high, the Genesis Mission received an average rating of: 9.5!



DEVANGELISM *A 'Pome' by Fr Robbie Lowe*

We are the Legion of the Lost
We did not know we'd greatly sinned
We passed Our Lady's every day
But never thought to venture in.

But it weren't just us that failed
As we paused to steal and cuss
Unless there was a Jumble Sale
Nobody invited us

Regulars who shuffled in
Left us largely to our fate
They never said that God lived here
The old church door was Heaven's Gate

That glowing from these altars raised
Whence prayers ascend and saints have trod
Effulgence of the Light Divine
Revealed mankind transformed by God

That in that sacred, half-lit box
These stains could have been washed away
And I be freed from powers dark
Which have led me here today
I could have been Our Lady's child
Brother, sister of the Christ
Turned to Him on Calvary
And with Him entered Paradise

But none of this I knew or cared
I never knew a Pentecost
And thus a different fire consumes
This tragic Legion of the Lost

YOU knew the truth. YOU held the key
You never said a single word
Did you not want me to be free
And serve the One whom you call Lord?

And so we wait in dungeons dark
To be consumed by fires of Hell
While those this truth declined to tell
Are due to end up here as well.



**MISSION
POSSIBLE**
GO MAKE DISCIPLES

Do you want to be able to share your faith with others but don't know where to start? Do you find it difficult to talk about with your nearest and dearest? Are you afraid you might be asked difficult questions and won't have all the answers? Mission Made Possible will help you with all these things and there are sessions starting near you very soon.

To register or for more information please contact a member of the team:

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Youth Events... Trio meet for the first time!



CODY, ELEANOR & TY met for the first-time during lockdown at one of the online drama courses. It is incredible how the trio, along with others, managed to form a bond from their own living. Finally, at Senior camp, during October half term, they met in person. Ty said, "It was as though we have always been friends, I had forgotten that we first met online". It has been incredible to observe how much the young people got to know each other through Zoom. *By Design Theatre Company* demonstrated incredible skill in encouraging the young people's personalities to shine through during the online courses. This meant that the group could connect and get to know one another.

Rise Theatre will be running a series of regional events for our young people aged 11 – 18 (Year 6 – Year 13). Young people will focus on developing friendships and the importance of building a community. The dates are:

8th Jan – Weymouth

29th Jan – Plymouth (venue to be confirmed)

12th Feb – Newquay

5th March – St Rita's, Honiton

26th March – Torquay (venue to be confirmed)

In the planning there will be training for adult volunteers and a series of sessions for the youth called '*Where is God in that!*'.

To hear about other events and to be added to the youth events mailing list please contact **Saskia** at youth@prcdtr.org.uk



FRANCISCAN AT HOME

Online learning at your convenience

Franciscan at Home Workshops

Steubenville University's *Franciscan at Home* is the catechetical resource for our diocese and now offers a range of around 150 workshops to suit individuals needs and interests.

Our present groups continue to enjoy a variety of workshops - for example, on Scripture, Empathic Listening, the Old and New Testaments, on the Catechism and Liturgy and the Deposit of Faith. The sessions are interactive as people engage with the material and bring their own thoughts, material and insights.

' ... it was such a joy for me both to listen to The Story and read The Story - not once, but many times, as it helped to reinforce for me the breadth and depth of God's love for us which was so perfectly manifested in the life of Jesus Christ.' (Participant - November 2021)

We have new workshops starting in the New Year for those who would like to begin with the Initial Workshops. Contact us for more information and let us know what times are good for you (we already have people waiting to join and others ready to lead).

Join us to share information and insights on The Human Person online - travel is not a problem.

Please contact Deborah:
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Quote from Pope Francis

Don't let lack of training stop you from evangelizing...

"...each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are." (EG 121)

Tips

Pray before going out
Listen well to others
when engaging with them.

Proverb

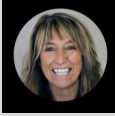
To answer before listening-- that is folly and shame. (Proverbs 18:13 NIV)



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Perfect Christmas Gift!

A Night Journey - by Fr Robbie Low.

This beautiful new book by Fr Robbie Low, Priest of our Diocese will capture the imagination of children and adults alike and is the perfect gift to evangelise your children and grandchildren - and you! A real adventure story, this deeply moving and profound this book is set to bring hearts to Jesus.

Perfect for Christmas family time.

Watch the short video to hear a bit more from Fr Robbie and for purchasing details.

https://youtu.be/1td_OiJli6Y



Perfect Christmas Gift!

The perfect gift that's not just for Christmas...

Evangelise your family with a beautiful



Family Prayer Box

Every item has been prayed over as they are compiled.

'The family that prays together stays together'

Contact deborah.vanKroonenburg@pcdtr.org.uk to order