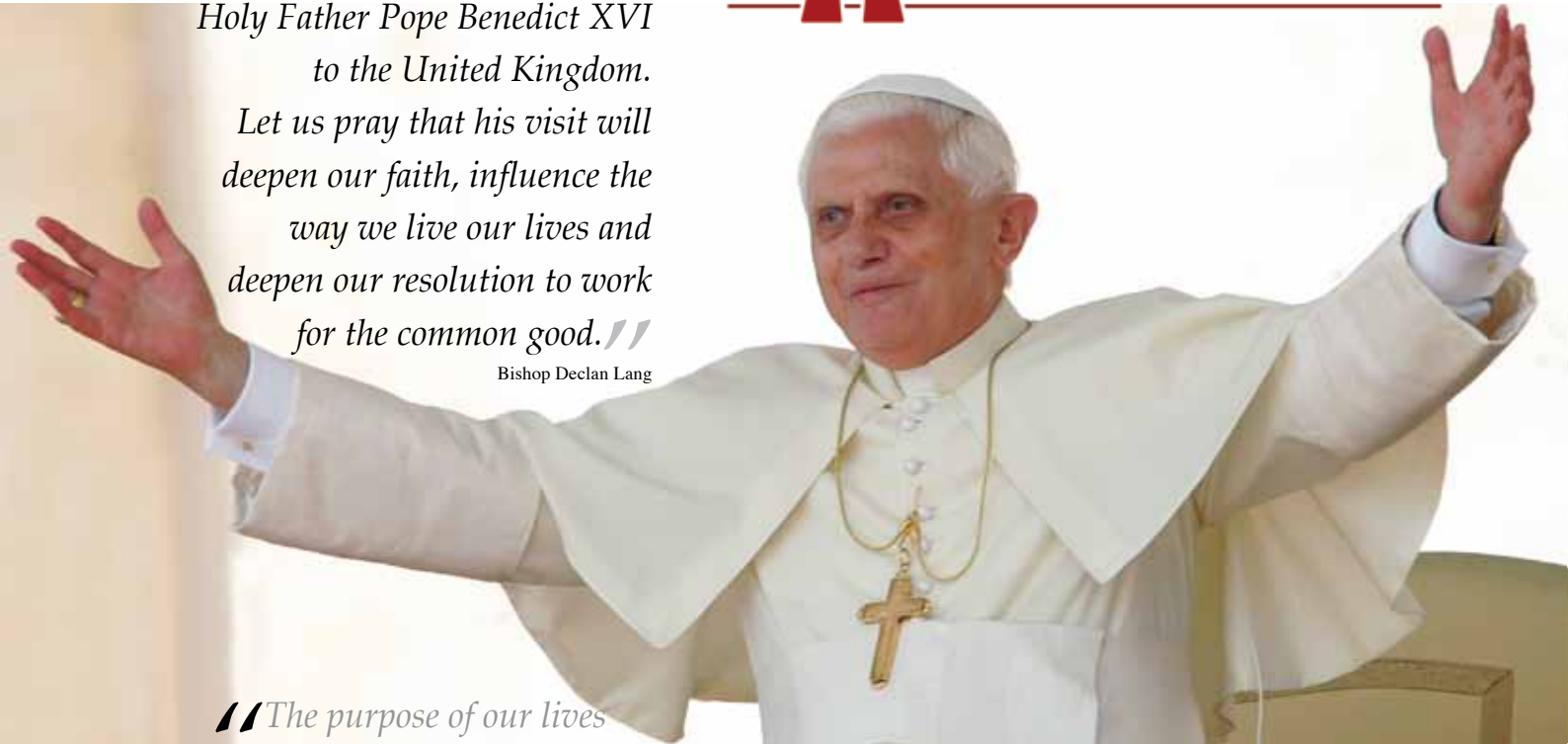


“I am delighted that the people of our diocese have responded so positively in preparing to welcome our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom.

Let us pray that his visit will deepen our faith, influence the way we live our lives and deepen our resolution to work for the common good.”

Bishop Declan Lang



“The purpose of our lives is to reveal God to others.

And only where God is seen does life truly begin. Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.

There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know Him and to speak to others of our friendship with Him.”

Pope Benedict XVI's homily to begin his ministry as Pope 24 April 2005

A Man WHO BUILDS BRIDGES

No not a civil engineer, but a bishop! Not using steel and concrete, but community and relationships: the Bishop of Rome, Pope Benedict XVI who soon comes to our shores. For the Government of the United Kingdom he comes as a Head of State (a very small one - a square mile in Rome called Vatican City). But that is not what excites Catholics and many others of all faiths.

He comes as the focal point of unity for a worldwide Church, the one bishop in the world whose care extends into every nation and culture in this 'Universal' community. The word 'Catholic' is not a title or label for the Church but a description of what we must be - universal in our care, our welcome, our thinking and our attitudes. The Pope is the Bishop for the whole world. When he comes to England and Scotland, he carries with him our brothers and sisters from all the world's continents. He is our 'bridge' that unites us to each other. In welcoming him we welcome our African brothers, our Asian sisters, our Latin American children, our North American young people, our European families and Australian communities. That is why one of the main titles or descriptions for the Pope is 'Supreme Pontiff'. It's from Latin and means the 'greatest bridge builder'.

So this bridge builder (or 'Pontiff') ensures that the Catholic Church is there in Pakistan among the flood victims bringing urgently much-needed aid; ensures that 25% of all the healthcare in Africa and Latin America is provided by the Catholic Church; ensures that the immense number of Catholic schools around the world open doors of opportunity and learning for impoverished children.

Benedict the bridge builder helps us to build a better world: of justice, equality and sharing. In welcoming him we are welcoming all our brothers and sisters around the world - especially the poorest.

Father Richard McKay, Parish Priest of St Nicholas of Tolentino, Bristol



*“Dear young people,
what are you seeking?
What is God whispering to you?
The hope which never
disappoints is Jesus Christ.
Nourished by personal prayer,
prompted in silence,
shaped by the Church’s liturgy
you will discover the particular
vocation God has for you.
Embrace it with joy.
You are Christ’s disciples today
Show the world the reason for the
hope that resonates within you.
Tell others about the truth
that sets you free”*

Pope Benedict XVI meeting with young people 19 April 2008

*“God has created me to do
Him some definite service.
He has committed some work
to me which He has not
committed to another.
I have my mission.
I may not know what it is in this life.
But I shall be told in the next.
I am a link in a chain,
a bond of connection between persons.
He has not created me for nothing.
I shall do good. I shall do His work.
Therefore I will trust Him.
Whatever I do, wherever I am,
I cannot be thrown away.
If I am in sickness,
my sickness may serve Him.
If I am in sorrow,
my sorrow may serve Him.
He does nothing in vain.
He knows what He is about.”*

John Henry Newman

John Henry NEWMAN

It was Sunday evening in Oxford and a young student listened to the beautiful sound of church bells pealing. He wrote in a letter to a friend.

“Bells pealing, the pleasure of hearing them. It leads the mind to a longing after something I know not what ... We have a kind of longing after something dear to us and well known to us. Such is my feeling at this moment as I hear them.”

That young man is known to the world as Cardinal John Henry Newman. On Sunday 19 September Pope Benedict XVI will beatify Newman during a Mass at Cofton Park in Birmingham. 1,700 people from our diocese will be present and 25 of our priests will concelebrate at the Mass.

Newman is loved and admired by many people for his hymns, poems, prayers, and teaching on the faith but for me those few words that he wrote as a young man sum up the meaning of his life.

“We have a kind of longing after something dear to us and well known to us.” In Newman’s long life we see where that longing led him. He was drawn from a youthful scepticism to ministry in the Church of England and, after much inner struggle, reception and ordination in the Catholic Church. What led him was his longing for beauty, for love, for truth.

He recognised that within each of us there is a great depth. Sometimes our longing is focussed on achieving a goal in life or the love of another person or our family but just as often there is no focus for our desires, we are simply longing. Shakespeare wrote of our ‘immortal longings’.

The longings in our hearts have been put there by God. As St Augustine wrote in the fourth century ‘You have made us for yourself O Lord and our hearts are restless until they rest in you’.

That is also what Newman teaches us. We can come to God, not only with our heads but with the whole of our being. In his book the ‘Grammar of Assent’ Newman teaches that it is only when we come to God with an attitude of openness that we experience God. When we open all the longings of our souls, the desires of our hearts, the imagination of our minds then we will discover that as we move toward God He is in fact moving toward us in the person of Jesus Christ. We will find that God longs for us as much as we long for God.

May the teaching and the prayers of Blessed John Henry Newman draw us closer to God.

Father Michael McAndrew, Clifton Diocese Papal Visit Coordinator



The Hyde Park VIGIL

There will be a Prayer Vigil on Saturday 18 September. 80,000 people joining with Pope Benedict XVI in Hyde Park is a wonderful celebration of our faith. The Prayer Vigil will show how our faith influences our lives and the community of which we are a part.

The procession will be led by young people from every diocese. 100 young people from our diocese will be part of this procession.

There will be an hour’s joyful reflection entitled, ‘The Heart of the Church’. That is a heart that sees, a heart that understands, a heart that serves and a heart that seeks justice.

The Holy Father will preside at a Liturgy of the Word. He will lead us in prayer during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

100 young people from across our diocese have been preparing for this event. On the morning of 18 September they will be among 2,500 people to whom the Pope will speak on the Piazza after celebrating Mass at Westminster Cathedral. A further 1,100 Catholics from the West Country are taking part in this amazing vigil of prayer and witness of unity.

Dave Wheat, Clifton Diocese Youth Ministry Coordinator

THE BIG ASSEMBLY

3,000 children, young people, teachers, chaplains, parents and carers will gather to meet Pope Benedict XVI on 17 September at St Mary’s University College in Twickenham. Among them will be 131 representatives from schools and colleges in our diocese. They are travelling from all parts of the West Country to attend this once in a life time event.

It is ‘The Big Assembly.’ Pope Benedict XVI will address those gathered and speak to them in his role as Shepherd to the Church. This unique occasion will see the Holy Father speak as a teacher to our young people.

People who can’t make it can still take part. Schools and colleges throughout our diocese will be televising ‘The Big Assembly’ live in their school halls. Children, young people and adults will sing along to the joyful hymns and join in the prayers, uniting our diocese in hope and in love with the Holy Father.

This will be a school assembly like no other!

Father Tom Finnegan, Parish Priest of St Teresa of the Child Jesus, Filton, Bristol and Chaplain to St Bede’s College, Bristol



*“God’s face took
on a human face
letting itself be seen
and recognised in
Jesus, the Son of the
Virgin Mary who
for this reason we
venerate with the
loftiest title of
Mother of God.”*

Pope Benedict XVI 1 January 2010
Feast of Mary Mother of God

Our Lady OF THE TAPER

On the eve of the Holy Father’s historic visit to the United Kingdom a special evening of prayer is taking place in our Cathedral. Led by Bishop Declan and Bishop Thomas Burns of Menevia we will join together and pray that the papal visit lights up the heart of our nation.

All are welcome to take part from 7pm to 10pm on Wednesday 15 September.

This unique time in our spiritual lives sees our local Catholic community hosting the statue of Our Lady of the Taper on pilgrimage to the Holy Father in London.

Pope Benedict XVI arrives on Thursday 16 September to begin a four day visit to the United Kingdom. Although he is not visiting Wales during these four days he will, however, be conscious of the people of Wales most notably through the presence of the statue of Our Lady of the Taper from the National Shrine of Cardigan at the Mass in Westminster Cathedral.

The statue is being transported to London on Thursday 16 September and we, as a diocese, are in a fortunate position to be able to welcome the statue of Our Lady into our Cathedral on Wednesday 15 September.

There will be a celebration of Evening Prayer at 7pm beginning with a Service of Light. After Evening Prayer there will be a Vigil of Prayer and the Cathedral will remain open until 10pm.

The focus of our coming together will be to pray for the Holy Father and his visit to our countries. Bishop Declan invites



you take part in this special celebration. It would be wonderful if every parish in our diocese sends a delegation of parishioners to be at this Vigil of Prayer with Bishop Declan and Bishop Tom. The many young people taking part in the Hyde Park Prayer Vigil with Pope Benedict XVI will also be taking part in our special evening of prayer.

The statue of Our Lady of the Taper will leave the Cathedral and continue its pilgrimage to Westminster Cathedral on Thursday 16 September after the 7.30am Mass. Again, all are welcome to join in the celebration of Mass on this historic day. Father Christopher Whitehead, Clifton Diocese Director for Adult Education and Evangelisation