

Amazing Grace information sheet

Three months before the start of the Second Vatican Council, Blessed Pope John XXIII published a document encouraging the Church Fathers and the wider Church to prepare through acts of penance and reflection on their relationship with God. He wrote that his hope that the Council would bring an 'abundance of light and grace' where the souls of the faithful 'glow with desire' of God. Such beautiful words demonstrate the power of prayer, fasting and almsgiving as a way of preparing ourselves for heaven and the living out of a truly Christian life today.

This Year of Faith, which started last October and runs through to November, coincides with the 50th anniversary of the council announced by Blessed Pope John XXIII. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI asks us once more to consider our lives and the whole of history as a to and fro between holiness and sin, and he calls us to see where we can do better as a follower of Christ.

Faith-sharing

This Lent, the diocesan faith-sharing booklet will look at the mercy and love shown by God over the centuries. Tracing the path of God's relationship with his people and our own personal relationship with him, Amazing Grace, can be used by individuals as well as by groups for reflection and prayer.

So often, our lives as Christians are lived apart from others who hold the same values and beliefs. We assemble on a Sunday (or Saturday evening for the vigil Mass), say our prayers at night and grace before meals but our interaction with other Christians is limited at other times. Taking part in a Small Christian Community, many of which can be found across the Diocese, will help your faith to grow providing an opportunity so rarely found elsewhere. Participating in a group, sharing your faith with others, will also help you to develop your relationship with other Christians. May we suggest, therefore, that you consider taking part in faith-sharing this Lent, try it out as something for the weekdays in between Sunday Mass as a way of extending your prayer life with others.

Amazing Grace

This Lent, the diocesan faith-sharing resource will be on the theme of God's redeeming love and our place in the story of salvation. The six group sessions are as follows:

1. Why did God put us here? The establishment of a relationship between creator and creature
2. Risings and Fallings: God's firm faithfulness chronicled through the Old Testament
3. What shall we do? Dying to sin and rising to new life in Christ: baptism
4. Lead us not...: the siren call and rationalisation of sin
5. Continuing conversion: the continuous call to a contrite heart; prayer, fasting and almsgiving
6. The healing power: on the mercy of God and the power of the forgiveness that we receive

Newsletter insert

Amazing Grace, the latest diocesan faith-sharing booklet, will help groups and individuals explore their relationship with God in terms of mercy, sin and forgiveness. The season will last for the six weeks of Lent (starting on 17 February and ending on Holy Saturday, 31 March 2013). Booklets will be available for sale shortly and you will be able to sign up for groups after Mass. More information and downloadable audio files will be on the diocesan website (<http://beta.rcdow.org.uk/faith/small-groups/>) from the start of the season.