

Archbishop Vincent Nichols 'Pause for Thought'

Wednesday 1 February 2012.

The other day, a rather famous author said that he would leave tweeting to the birds. I suppose I'm not that far behind him myself because I just cannot get the hang of all those abbreviations. Who would easily guess that lol means lots of laughs. I thought it meant lots of love!

But I have to admire the skill of those who manage to get their message down to 147 letters. You really have to be clear about what you want to say!

That's why the 500 words children's writing competition, launched here on Monday, is such a good idea. Concentrate, get the personalities of your characters clear, chose your words carefully and go for it!

A good author makes a story come alive and gives flesh and blood to their main characters. That's what they want to achieve. That's what catches our imagination and draws us into the story. We become part of the drama. We find ourselves taking sides, building up sympathy, or dislike, for characters involved.

And a good story goes further. It touches something that we recognise as true – true about our world and true about ourselves. When that happens, we see again how well chosen words can change the way we see the world, and how we act in it.

No wonder, then, at the heart of the Christian faith is this simple truth: the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. All the words that God had used came to life in one person so that we could see and understand.

The message is very simple: God is our loving Father who breathes into us the gift of life; his love and truth are made visible in Jesus; He gives us his own Spirit so that we can find forgiveness and love and then act on them each day in our world.

There it is: a great message in less than 50 words.

Each of us can tell the great story in our own way: remembering, of course, that actions speak even louder than words!