

THE RISE OF CONFESSION IN THE DIOCESE OF LANCASTER

10 September 2013



BEGINS –

Michael Campbell, Bishop of Lancaster, sees the recent report from the Bishops' Home Mission Desk on the rise in confessions across England and Wales as confirming the importance of the Diocese of Lancaster's ***The Light is ON for YOU*** initiative. Entering its third year, ***The Light is ON for YOU*** initiative has involved every parish church in the Diocese being open for an hour on a Wednesday evening during Advent and Lent for priests to hear confessions.

Bishop Campbell - along with Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York – shared among the bishops¹ on the importance of Confession during the last Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelisation, drawing on the Diocese of Lancaster's promotion of the Sacrament of Reconciliation amongst both Mass-going and lapsed Catholics alike.

Feedback about the success of ***The Light is ON for YOU*** includes the following responses from priests in the Diocese:

Of the 32 priests reporting back, 13 priests reported 33 penitents returning to Church after a long absence. One priest reported 5 penitents returning to the Church on one night after advertising it in the Spar, Tesco, the Leisure Centre and 5 pubs.

16 priests reported 52+ Mass-going Catholics returning to confession after a long absence. Priests gave the following responses, 'We certainly have had quite a few penitents who haven't been for many years - such as 20 or 25 years!!'; 'Some penitents have never been near the Sacrament since the 1970's'.

Another priest reported:

'I have heard a number of confessions who have been away from the Sacrament for quite a number of years, one who has not been for 20 years, another for 15. I think that ***The Light is ON for YOU*** initiative has heightened people's awareness of the Sacrament and encouraged the faithful to make use of its ready availability. I am hearing more confessions now - then when I first arrived here.'

Bishop Campbell said:

'Reading the conclusions of the Home Mission Desk report on the recent rise in confessions reflects many of the conclusions of the Diocese of Lancaster after two years of conducting ***The Light is ON for YOU***. Where the Sacrament is preached about thoroughly, well-advertised and made available at popular times together with good catechesis (even with demonstrations) the results can be quite significant.'

He added:

'I was particularly struck by the observation of one priest about the return of lapsed Catholics to confession, when he said "I think very often those who have been away from the Sacrament for a long time are very often surprised and delighted to find it such a positive and affirming experience.' This is very much my own experience and what some of our priests have expressed to me. My hope is that this Advent many more Catholics will receive Christ's healing through this marvellous Sacrament'.

ENDS -

¹ During the English Language groups