

# METANOIA PROJECT Proclaiming the Good News of God's Kingdom



Welcome to our latest newsletter - Thank you for being on this Metanoia Project adventure with us! As ever, God has been so faithful and we've really seen Him working in the lives of so many people this year. It's so exciting to be part of His plan and we hope you'll enjoy reading about it in the following pieces. There's so much, we couldn't fit it all in so here is just a taste...



Community is at the heart of Metanoia Project with our members committing for a year at a time to 'turning the world upside down' (Acts 17:6). We live by the three attitudes of Communion, Detachment and Mission, sharing life together and supporting the ministry of Metanoia Project. Our Community is still relatively young, so we are continuously working out what it looks like with most members living in their own homes and working in many different fields. It is a worthwhile challenge though as we see the impact it has on the members and those we serve. Jonathan tells us a bit about his experience: Metanoia Community have enjoyed a very blessed and fruitful year. Being part of the Community is very uplifting, joyful and comforting. Knowing that each Community member is praying and building you up with love is a wonderful blessing. A highlight for me was in October, when we enjoyed a fantastic week of guided prayer as part of a Retreat in Daily Life. I must admit, I was unsure what to expect as we entered the week. I was even more anxious as I had two late nights to negotiate at work and the idea of spending extra time in prayer seemed impossible! However, of course nothing is impossible with God! Not only was my week busy, it was busy with time with Jesus! I honestly couldn't believe I could squeeze in my prayer times and visits to my amazing prayer guide each evening and yet each day brought me into a deeper relationship with Jesus. By the end of the week, my heart had truly been opened by the amazing joy of really meeting Jesus in prayer through the Scriptures. Still spending time bathing in his merciful love, what an awesome experience! Meeting back together with the rest of the Community members at the end of the week and sharing our experiences was equally uplifting and encouraging. It made me reflect on how fortunate I am to be part of the Metanoia Community. Having the loving, prayerful support of each member gives me great comfort. Praise God for Metanoia and I am looking forward to the year ahead and all that awaits us!



University Chaplaincy was a new venture on which we were just starting out when we wrote our last newsletter. Since then, Joe has been officially appointed as Catholic Lay Chaplain at the University of Central Lancashire here in Preston which, whilst it comes with its own challenges, has made access to students much easier. Here one of the young adults will tell you all about what's been going on:

Hello, I'm Monika, a student and a young adult tasked with summarising our past year of activities. While strolling through WhatsApp, social media, and my calendar to refresh my memory, I couldn't believe how much we were able to achieve in just a year, thanks to Metanoia Project and their supporters. Truly, it was an amazing year! I'd love to describe everything in detail, but that wouldn't be possible with the available space and out of respect for the dear reader's time. But suffice to say we have grown in faith, built relationships with our Lord Jesus, explored the culture and history of the UK, as well as making unforgettable memories and friends. Starting with the biggest events, Metanoia organised numerous trips for us and updated us on faith-related events in the area, and kindly took us on: a trip to Windermere in the Lake District; the Metanoia retreat 'The Kingdom Come' in Barmouth, Wales; a trip to the Heritage Centre at Stonehurst College to see the exhibit on the Turin Shroud; a trip to Ladywell; a trip to York to see the house of St. Margaret Clitherow and participate in evening prayer at York Minster; participation in a Charismatic event, Overflow, in Birmingham; and the 'Hope in the Future' event in Wigan; participation in a student retreat at Castlerigg Manor, Keswick; and finally, a trip to Blackpool to enjoy the Illuminations and fish and chips!

Seems like a lot, doesn't it? But that's not all! On top of all these amazing events, we actively attended regular Metanoia-led events such as: Unveiled (Friday worship and Adoration), social events (e.g. BBQ and bowling), as well as a student-tailored Bible Basics course on The Old Testament. We have formed a music group for the 4:30pm Sunday Mass at St Wilfrid's, after which students and young adults also participated in Bible studies, watched and discussed a series of 10 videos about the Catholic faith by Bishop Robert Baron, as well as discussed the structure of the Mass to better understand its beauty. Finally, we've been regularly visited by the lovely Catholic author and evangelist, Barbara Mason, who has been educating us on the topics: spirit, soul, and body;



our identity in Christ, and helped us explore the Ten Commandments in detail. We were also blessed through talks by Daniella Stephens on the importance of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration, and a talk by the CAFOD Head of the African region, Kayode Akintola, that opened our eyes to how many people are experiencing life differently to us. These events don't even include the amount of extra time that the Metanoia team have spent listening to our questions, problems, and stories. We are immensely grateful to Metanoia and their supporters for making all that possible. God bless you all.







As well as all the usual Liturgical celebrations, assemblies, prayer times, fundraising, after school groups, and reflection days, Immy tells us about a few more specific things that we are currently carrying out at Corpus Christi Catholic High School: There has been so much going on in our school chaplaincy service! For a start, we have expanded the time we are providing there to 50 hours per week, so



that we can increase the variety of ministry with pupils and staff. We run Community Action groups, often supported by expert gardener and wonderful Metanoia Community member, Tony. These are for young people who are struggling to engage with everyday school life, to encourage them to do something practical and achievable. They have channelled their energy into cultivating a school garden, fully clearing a space to dig plots and grow vegetables, and they made a beautiful Advent wreath this year. With the support of Fr Stephen Talbutt, our Priest Chaplain, we are able to provide access to Jesus in the Eucharist at a weekly Mass and a fortnightly lunchtime event called Presence, at which staff and pupils can have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and meet the Lord's mercy and forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We are also journeying alongside some pupils who have chosen to receive the Sacraments of First Holy Communion, Confirmation and even two who are preparing to be received into the Church through Baptism! We have had huge uptake in the retreats to Castlerigg that we take Years 8 and 10 on, with both being oversubscribed. We have even made provision to take two groups of Year 8 so that everyone who wants to can come! These retreats are such a good opportunity for us to build relationships with the pupils and many come back to school having had a beautiful experience of taking a step back from all the busyness of their normal lives and hopefully having a deeper encounter with the Lord. A beautiful and ever-more-frequent part of our role in school is pastoral support of pupils who are experiencing difficulty in many different aspects of their lives. We are always there for pupils to come and be completely honest and open



and we try to check in on pupils frequently when we are aware that they are struggling. Please keep our pupils in your prayers as many of them face extremely difficult situations. As a fruit of our time in school, we are seeing more and more pupils joining us at our Anointed and Sent youth groups on a Sunday night at St Clare's. This forges good community in the young people, as they encounter others their age who have faith and are walking with Jesus. We even have pupils who have joined our Yoke Young Leaders Programme, who are now serving and passing on their faith to others!



The Anointed (age 11-14) and Sent (age 14-18) youth groups have grown in number and strength this year and we have such a brilliant time on Sunday nights, sometimes joined together and sometimes with more age-specific input in the separate groups. Either way we play, pray and grow in faith together by exploring

the Gospel and the Catholic Faith in inventive ways! I'll leave it to one young person to tell you their perspective: Hi I'm Daisy and I go to Corpus Christi Catholic High School. The first time I ever spoke to the Metanoia Project group was through school and at the start I wasn't really interested. However, in Year 8 I started taking more notice, going to after school club and then that led on to going on retreat. I loved it so much that I started going to the Sunday youth group. I went for a few weeks and then told my friends about it. They started coming and now we all love it. Youth group is what motivates me for the week!



For 8-11 year olds we have two Seekers groups, one at St Clare's on a Tuesday evening and one at St Mary's, Lea Town as an after school club. Led by Nora and ably assisted by wonderful volunteers and young leaders, over the last 12 months our Seekers youth groups have been meeting weekly to explore the Sunday Gospels, learn about the Saints and special Feast days in our Church. The groups have been growing in size and the children are full of enthusiasm and a thirst for Jesus. This is what one of our Seekers has to say about their experience of



Seekers: "I come to Seekers straight from school and I get excited at the end of the day to know I'm coming. We eat, play fun games, and learn about God and how much He loves us. I love learning songs and singing in church. Seekers is the best Friday."



Hi, Jen here to tell you about our Diakonos Service Ministry. The Drop In is for those experiencing homelessness and is based inside St Wilfrid's Church. Every Wednesday evening, we welcome the homeless community, and all those in need, into church by handing out donated clothes and toiletries, offering a warm drink, a biscuit or two, and a place to sit and chat. As we do this, we are welcoming people into the arms of Jesus. Our volunteers offer one-to-one prayer throughout the evening, and we always finish our session in a more formal group prayer which is optional for all who attend. The evening is well attended with anywhere between 15 and 50 people seeking basic items and God's love and mercy. In order to keep our Drop In going, we rely fully on the generosity of individuals and groups who help in many different ways. God's provision is beautiful, and we do see so many prayers answered and His abundant love. Over the course of this year, I have watched God transform the Drop In. The year started with lots of people still in fear of Covid and receiving the items they needed and leaving. They didn't want to stay. Feeling really frustrated by this, in prayer I heard God asking us to keep 'inviting' and to share Him 'simply'. The following week and from then on, after our volunteers increased their 'inviting' and the group prayer becoming shared 'simply', there has been a huge increase in people staying. We have had a beautiful problem of finding more chairs and changing the location in the church for more space. Praise God! We are seeing a



community of people forming: a community listening to God's Word and being changed by Him. One lady, who has stayed for prayer consistently, told me last week, that she's worked out that prayer is for "us ordinary people", and our Wednesday prayer comes back to mind throughout the trials of her harsh week. She is learning to accept that Jesus does love her, even when she messes up. Wednesday nights are extremely beautiful, the people who come, the volunteers and myself leave changed and strengthened in His power every week. Praise God for His faithfulness!







Jen has been working hard to put more focus onto our Kairos Volunteer Programme this year and we now have 27 volunteers all actively proclaiming the Good News. Our volunteers are wonderful, and each bring such life to our different ministries. As well as our Drop In and youth ministry volunteers we have a group behind the scenes who serve Jesus by doing the jobs no one sees! We really could not run Metanoia Project without the help of each and every person saying 'yes' to God by serving Him in this way. As well as our adult volunteers we have 11 young leaders who also make all areas of our ministry so much richer and more lively! As well as their more specific training and formation times, over the year, we have three training and formation days, in

which all volunteers and young leaders come together. It is on these days that we experience a diverse group of people of all ages, who are passionately working together to bring about the Kingdom of God. We are always looking for volunteers in every area of our ministry, so please get in touch and share the skills God has given you! Read about the experiences of one young leader and one volunteer below to hear what you too could be receiving...

My name is Isabel and I'm in my second year as a young leader. I volunteer with different ministries such as the Seekers youth group where we teach them what it's like to be a Catholic and all about God. I also help in the homeless Drop In and at Unveiled. As a young leader, I really enjoy going away on retreat with the other young leaders. These times allow me to grow in Christ more and allow me to learn more about Him as I grow, which allows my faith to grow stronger. Having friends through the Young Leaders Programme, who feel the same way I do about Jesus, is such a special blessing and something I will forever be grateful for. However, I still find it hard to talk about what I do with others, as I feel like sometimes they will not understand my reasons for why I do this or just simply judge. But as I grow more with Jesus I allow myself to realise I shouldn't try to hide what I do from others, because if people don't understand what I do and why I do it then they just have not realised the love of the Lord yet. Coming up, I'm looking forward TO more retreats, more volunteering IN the ministries and seeing what God has in store for me through the Young Leaders Programme.



My name is Michael and I'm a volunteer with Metanoia Project. I'm particularly involved with the Wednesday evening Drop In for the homeless. I am heavily involved in the life of my Parish, but for some time had felt there was something missing in my service. Then I read one of the early letters of Pope Francis in which he reiterated our duty as Christians to reach out and bring Jesus to the marginalised of society. This struck a note with me, and I felt called to find some way to support the homeless. I went on to the internet looking for organisations helping the poor, and came across Metanoia Project, a group steeped in the Catholic tradition, which seemed important to me, and I am coming up to my 2nd anniversary as a volunteer. What touches me very much working with the homeless is how positive they are about life and how supportive they are of each other, which amazes me, given the hardships they face. They laugh and joke with us and are so thankful for the (sometimes meagre) support we can give them. I don't find it easy to 'mix' with people generally, I'm certainly not the life and soul of a party, but Jesus is helping and using me to be Him to these people. But maybe even more so, He is using the homeless to be Jesus to me.

One big change this Christmas is that Nora will be leaving the employment of Metanoia Project. Nora has brought so much to her role, not least joy and practicality, turning her hand to almost anything. Above all, Nora has been a blessing to so many children and young families, helping them make Jesus the centre of their lives. She won't be gone from Metanoia Project completely, as you can read below, but we want to take this opportunity to thank Nora for her hard work and to wish her well in her next role. Over to Nora:



Having been involved with Metanoia for more than a decade, it seems so strange to say that I will be moving on to pastures new. However, it isn't quite right to say that as, although I am leaving my employment with Metanoia Project, I couldn't leave the Community and the Project really. Metanoia Project, and Ruth and Joe, have been a huge part of my own faith formation. In Metanoia I have a place where I can worship, learn, and teach with my friends and fellow Catholics. This is something I couldn't give up. I have loved my role as Children and Families Coordinator and have learnt a huge variety of skills, including origami, film editing and numerous active games. But more importantly I have seen the beauty in so many of God's children, a willingness to learn more, to know God better, and to grow in His love. It is an honour to be trusted in the faith formation of these wonderful people and I have been so blessed to call it my job for the last 5 years. And what an adventure it has been, with national conferences, weekly youth groups, school visits, Parish missions, volunteers' days and so much more; all whilst turning towards God and heading for Heaven! I will be starting a new job in January, but Metanoia Project will still be a part of my life. I look forward to volunteering and growing more in communion with our Community as we continue to proclaim the Good News in Preston and beyond.



**Come and Work With Us!** If you love the sound of what we do and, most importantly, share our vision for evangelisation, community and the apostolate of the laity then why not consider joining our Community and working for Metanoia Project? We are looking for passionate, gifted people who think they could help us move forward with any of the following:

Administration / Business Management    Children and Young Families    School and University Chaplaincy

Get in touch for an informal chat if you are interested. Working hours and financial package to be negotiated. If this is not for you, please pass on this invitation to anyone you think might be a great fit for our ministry!

**Thank you for your ongoing support!** We can never find the words to express how grateful we are for all of you who support us in so many ways, whether that be financially, by giving up your time, through words of encouragement or most importantly prayer. Please keep going - we need more of all of those things! *I thank my God every time I remember you...I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Phil 1:3-5)*