

Pilgrimage to Rome for Parish Evangelisation Cell System (PECS) Celebration



In celebration of the 30th year of the Parish Evangelisation Cell System beginning in Milan, Pope Francis was to give an audience to all cell members on Monday 18th November at 12 noon at Saint Pope Paul VI Hall in the Vatican.

Father Victor and 13 parishioners headed for Rome. The idea was to make a pilgrimage of our visit and indeed there was ample opportunity for prayer visits to Churches. Meghan Dimbylow, a Christian evangelist, from Reading joined us as she had been attending the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal for several months and after a soul searching retreat felt God was calling her to the Catholic Church.

Most of us had accommodation at the Madri Pie, a religious house close to St Peter's. There was a chapel where Father Victor celebrated Mass for us early on the Saturday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

We pilgrims took each day as a personal time of prayer and reflection.

Sunday 17th November 2019 in the morning many attended Mass at St Peter's on the World Day for the Poor where Pope Francis was the main celebrant. >>>>>



<<<<<<< **Basilica of Sant' Andrea della Valle.**
Main Altar backdrop, St Andrew being crucified.

Adoration began at 6.15pm

Father Paul Fenech, the vice-president of the International Organism of the Parish Evangelisation Cell System (PECS), gave an address.....

"Tomorrow we will be living a moment of grace. The meeting with the Holy Father is not an ordinary event. Many of us remember the meeting we had with Pope Francis four years ago. Maybe this meeting will be the last. It therefore deserves to be well prepared. Tonight, we are

in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, present in the body, in the blood, in his soul and divinity. The Eucharist reminds us of the consecration of the Son of God in his becoming man with us and for us; it reminds us of the consecration of Jesus Christ in his total gift of himself for each of us. In front of him, and with the grace of the Spirit that he gives us, we are invited to renew our baptismal consecration, and today to do so in a particular way: to consecrate ourselves to the New Evangelization and the method of the Cells of Evangelisation."

At the completion of Adoration we all made an.....

**ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE NEW EVANGELISATION THROUGH THE PARISH
EVANGELISATION CELLS [PECS]**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in whom I was baptized and placed to live my life on earth as a missionary disciple, today I want to consecrate to the Holy Trinity all my being and all my having so that according to my state of life, I can announce the Good News lived in my life to make grow the Kingdom of God and so that the whole Church and all parishes will become communities of cells. I ask for the intercession of Mary, star of the New Evangelisation, to bring to fruition my consecration. Amen.

Mass at 7pm

As Joseph de Metz-Noblat, bishop of Langres, France, and priests processed to the altar with the accompaniment of the choir and congregation, I felt the awesomeness and solemnity of the occasion, the richness and splendour of our worship. After the homily, the bishop invited Meghan to come forward to make the profession of faith; she was subsequently accepted into full communion with the Catholic Church followed immediately by the celebration of confirmation; she has taken as confirmation name Faustina, after the Polish nun and mystic Saint Maria Faustyna Kowalska (1905-1938). A truly blessed occasion! The look of pure joy on Megan's face was a great grace for me. Very moving and uplifting! In spite of all the hurdles she faces, the joy of joining the Catholic Church has given Meghan such inspiration.

Father Victor says...."Another highlight of the visit has been Meghan Dimbylow's acceptance into full communion with the Catholic Church on Sunday evening at the Basilica of Sant' Andrea della Valle. Approximately two thousand cell members attended the Mass which was preceded by adoration. Meghan's reception had a ring of poignancy; with her past experience in evangelism, she will certainly be a great asset nationally in furthering the cell evangelisation system."

There were so many people lined up to receive the Blessed Sacrament and it seemed at one time there would not be enough hosts for all, but I prayed to the Lord who provides for us to ensure there was enough and indeed there was.

Monday 18th November

Paul VI Audience Hall saw almost 4,000 PECS Cell members in attendance, from all over the world, with a contingent from China, from the underground Church. Among others giving witness, each member of a family from Palermo spoke about their lives. The husband had contemplated suicide and he and his wife went to therapy and then to the Church. They were advised to become cell members. Their lives were turned around and now both husband and wife are cell leaders.





The Sacrifice of the Mass followed, celebrated by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation. The celebration of Mass with so many nationalities present was so unifying and uplifting.

Over one hundred thousand cells are scattered throughout the world, with more being birthed.

Friendships begun in Milan over the last few years were from Spain, Italy, France and Ireland, many of whom we met again at this meeting.

Don Pigi Perini, the president of PECS International Organism, warmly welcomed Pope Francis; he was moved to tears when he spoke of the late Paola Marangione and her stirring work over 30 years and her unstinting generosity in donating much to the PECS International Organism.

May she rest in peace.

Paola Marangione RIP >>>>>>



Pope Francis arrived and greeted Don Pigi.



The Holy Father then addressed the congregation. The transcript is below.....

Pope Francis greeted many people, including Father Victor and Meghan.



ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF THE PARISH EVANGELIZATION CELL SYSTEM ON ITS 30th ANNIVERSARY - Paul VI Audience Hall Monday, 18 November 2019

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am glad that you have chosen to return to Rome to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of your history. I thank Don Piergiorgio Perini for the tireless work of evangelisation he has carried out over these decades. Now you are able to admire some of the fruits that the Lord has granted you with his grace. And thank you for the witness of 65 years of the priesthood and 90 of age! I asked him for the recipe: what does he do to be like this?

The Lord Jesus left his disciples a challenging teaching when he told them: "I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (John 15:16). Go, bear fruit and abide. This is the call to which one cannot escape when meeting the Lord and being conquered by his Gospel. Of course, Jesus did not tell his disciples that they would see the fruits of their work. He only assured them that the fruits would abide. This promise also applies to us. It is human to think that after so much work we also want to see the fruit of our effort; yet, the Gospel pushes us in a different direction.

Jesus did not make it easy for his disciples when he spoke of the radicality with which it was necessary to follow him. He told them: "When you have done all you were commanded, say: 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty'" (Luke 17: 10). Yet, if our efforts to proclaim the Gospel are total and we are always ready, then the perspective changes. Another parable reminds us of this, when Jesus says: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them" (Luke 12: 37). Let us touch with our own hands to feel how great and infinite God's love for us is! If we are faithful and vigilant, then he also allows us to see the fruits of our work.

Your history as Parish Cells of Evangelisation can easily be inscribed in this context. The fruitfulness of your commitment is reflected in the multiplication of Cells, which are now present in many parts of the world. Never tire of following the paths that the Spirit of the Risen Lord sets before you. Do not be afraid of the new, and do not let your pace be slowed by the difficulties that are inevitable on the path of evangelisation. When you are a missionary disciple, then enthusiasm must never be lacking! In your effort, support the prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit who is the comforter; in weakness, feel the strength of the community that never allows you to be left to your own devices.

Our parishes are invaded by many initiatives, where often, however, the life of the people is not deeply affected. You too are entrusted with the task of reviving, especially in this period, the life of our parish communities. This will be possible to the extent that they become, above all, a place to listen to the Word of God and celebrate the mystery of his death and resurrection. Only from here can one expect the work of evangelisation to become effective and fruitful, capable of bearing fruit. Unfortunately, for many reasons, many have moved away from our parishes. It is urgent, therefore, that we recover the need for encounter so as to reach the people where they live and work. If we have encountered Christ in our lives, then we cannot keep Him only for ourselves. It is crucial that we share this experience with others as well; this is the main road of evangelisation.

Do not forget: every time you meet someone, you play out a real story that can change a person's life. And this is not proselytising, it is bearing witness. It has always been like that. When Jesus saw Peter, Andrew, James and John working along the shore of the lake, he looked at them and

transformed their lives (cf. Luke 5: 1-11). The same thing is repeated in our day, when the encounter is the fruit of Christian love; it changes life because it reaches people's hearts and touches them deeply. May your proclamation become a witness of mercy, with which to make it clear that every attention given to one of the least is given to Jesus himself, who identifies with them (cf. Matthew 25: 40).

I accompany you with my blessing and ask you please not to forget to pray for me.

Thank you.

The multitude of cell members were entirely enthused by the Holy Father; the experience was truly exhilarating. Knowing that the Parish Evangelising cells are an integral part of the Catholic Church and none can challenge that, is a great encouragement for all of us, and highly applaudable, who strongly believe in this method of forming missionary disciples in Catholic parishes.

We pilgrims still had time to explore the city before our return home and each person had their own ideas of how to continue their spiritual journey. Some did a prayer walk around the Vatican City, others visited Churches to pray for special intentions.

Mealtimes were a great occasion for fellowship and uproarious camaraderie. Such a pleasure to share joys and sorrows with each other.

Leaving the Eternal City... many memories would go with us.

Praise be to God for all the blessings He gives us.

Cecilia Skudder.



NB: "Rome is called the Eternal City because ancient Romans believed that no matter what happened to the world or how many empires came and collapsed, Rome would go on forever. The enduring quality of the city continues even to this day, as Rome remains one of the most vibrant cities and a leading tourist destination in Europe." (2,500 years old.)

Father Victor says.....

Our visit to Rome has been a joy-filled experience indeed.

I personally have come back emboldened as I firmly believe that PECS is an effective tool of evangelisation in the Catholic Church.

Nearly four thousand were present at the **audience with Pope Francis** on Monday 18th November.