



**'Heart speaks to heart' – Pastoral Letter to the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia for the weekend of 24-25 January 2026**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

'Heart speaks to Heart'. I was reminded of this motto of St John Henry Newman as I attended the proclamation of him being declared a Doctor of the Church in Rome, which took place at the same time as we marked the first anniversary of the erection of our united Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia. God's heart speaks to our heart. He does so uniquely through the Heart of His own Son, Jesus. That encounter leads us to speak to the hearts of our brothers and sisters, many of whom do not know Jesus, and who, apart from us, may never have any chance of coming to know Him.

We have just heard Jesus summons to Peter and Andrew, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men". (Matthew 4). He spoke to their hearts and the world changed. They saw that Jesus was not just for the people of Israel but for all "people dwelling in darkness" (Matthew Ch 4) that they may see "the great light" which has come in Him. Experiencing this personally, I invite all of our parishes, schools and communities to be places where Heart speaks to Heart. Firstly, to recognise that Jesus' Heart touches our hearts. To encounter him is to 'set out on a completely new horizon' (Pope Benedict XVI), like those first apostles. Through the ongoing encounter with Him, we want to touch other's hearts so that they know the life-giving experience of encounter with Him. Our motivation is that we love Jesus and we want others to know the beauty of His friendship and His love.

This is why I share this message that we can become more fully a diocese where we are all seeking to be more deeply Jesus' missionary disciples.

We base this on a foundation of prayer and four pillars of our life which help us build a missionary and synodal diocese together. Those pillars are:

- Firstly, Youth and the raising up of young leaders in the diocese, including vocations to the priesthood.
- Secondly, an evangelising zeal which seeks to bring Jesus to others and develop initiatives which reach out to those in our society who do not know Jesus.
- Thirdly, a formation in faith which recognises that every baptised person is called to be missionary as we accompany one another in a synodal way.
- Fourthly, a loving service of those who are in need, especially those who are poor.

So, this is the vision and these are the priorities which I see for our Archdiocese. But how do we go about it. We must keep a focus on seeking to bring Jesus to those who do not know Him; on making our parishes, schools and communities places that are open and inviting to those who do not yet know Jesus Christ, so that they can encounter Him more deeply in these places. We do so by engaging as many of the baptised as possible in this outreach. Every person in the archdiocese is invited to participate and be part of this missionary work, using their baptismal gifts and talents for the service of all in our society.

There is an important complementarity between the ordained and the baptised. I have been struck again and again by this as I have visited parishes, schools and different communities. People love their priest and know that his ministry is irreplaceable in order for them to develop and deepen their relationship with Jesus. At the same time, our priests experience their greatest happiness in seeing their people grow in holiness, and in deepening their discipleship. Priest and people live alongside one another and challenge and support one another to live the particularity of their vocation in fidelity and at depth. One cannot exist without the other.

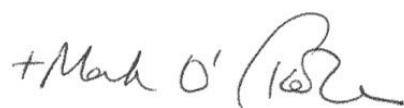
I am making six short reflections available which flesh out the foundation of prayer and the four pillars identified. I ask every parish to engage with these reflections during the weeks of Lent or Eastertide so that every parishioner has an opportunity to participate. On the website you can see the full Pastoral Message which gives this vision and says more about the foundation of prayer and the four pillars for mission.

When we generously embark on a life of seeking to share Jesus and our Catholic faith with others, it is important to remember that we are not the only ones concerned about disappearing Catholics, or where the young are going, or how we can grow in confidence to raise our voice in society. I have seen that many really want to be involved and do something but do not know how or have not been given the encouragement and permission to try.

I hope that we can each strengthen our love of Jesus and our desire to bring others to Him, and in this way deepen our sense that, "Heart speaks to Heart". Let us entrust our efforts to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the first missionary disciple to open her heart fully to Her Son, and the first to bring Him on mission to others. May she help each of us know more fully what it means to speak, "heart to heart".

Pray for me.

Yours devotedly,



+Mark O'Toole  
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