

## LIVERPOOL ARCHDIOCESAN CENTRE FOR EVANGELISATION

*From the Press Officer:*  
**Peter Heneghan**  
Tel (0151) 522 1007  
Mobile: 07980 821273  
Fax (0151) 522 1008  
Email: [p.heneghan@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:p.heneghan@rcaol.co.uk)



Croxteth Drive  
Sefton Park  
Liverpool  
L17 1AA

Web: [www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk)

**Homily preached by the Most Reverend Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, at Mass on the fifteenth anniversary of the death of Archbishop Derek Worlock. Tuesday 8 February 2011 at 5.15 pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool.**

I want to share with you one description of something that was a part of the Second Vatican Council and which gives us some understanding of the life and service of others and of Archbishop Worlock.

It came from the late Bishop Butler; he said that the Christian story began with a huge 'yes'. Jesus was God's 'yes' to the human family but very quickly we began to describe ourselves by what we were not. First of all we were not just Jews; and then it goes on through history. We were not those known as Arians, who doubted whether Jesus was utterly and completely God. There came a time when we said we were not just like Muslims or the ideas that come from them. At another stage we are not Protestants, we are not part of a reform and then there came a time when we became slightly more political: we are not Communists, and then suddenly God raised up among us Pope John XXIII. It is very interesting that within the first six months of being Pope he met a series of people.

He began by meeting Copts and then he met some Protestants, then he met some Muslims, then he met some Arians and then he met the Jews. Many people were disturbed, they did not know who they were anymore because here was a Pope who did not say what I am not but challenged people to say what I am.

He used a phrase in one of his letters, addressed not just 'to us', but 'to all people of good will', he gave us a pattern of saying we are people of good will. Among the many qualities of Archbishop Worlock there was that quality of the Second Vatican Council: he did not define us by what we were not, but called upon us to define ourselves by who we are, and therefore, shared his concerns and shared the concerns of so many people and worked with anybody of goodwill.

To me the sign of that is in the statue in Hope Street of himself and Bishop David Sheppard, erected by public subscription it says in that phrase from their book we were convinced it was 'Better Together': not what we are not but who we are. It is not easy to live like that, it is far easier to live by what we are not. To live by who we are is something much more demanding.

The second reflection I share with you. Some days before he died I called to see Archbishop Derek in Lourdes Hospital. He was very frail, we talked for a while and then when it was time to go he said something which summed up the very deep compassionate side of him for others. He just said, 'Patrick, we go back a long way don't we'. We both knew what he meant, it was not just years, it was something else. He was the Master of Ceremonies when I was ordained priest, the ordaining Bishop was Cardinal Godfrey who had been Archbishop here. Shortly after the ordination my sister was taken ill with cancer that could not be cured and I told the Cardinal and mentioned it to Monsignor Worlock. They were coming to Rome regularly at that time because of the Council and one day the Cardinal stopped me on the stairs at the College and asked, 'how's Mary?' I told him and he started to ask me about the treatment, suddenly I realised he could only ask me those questions because he was having the same treatment. And that is what is meant by 'going back a long way': Archbishop Worlock accompanied the Cardinal; and I accompanied my sister and the day the Cardinal died my sister said 'now there is somebody else praying for me'.

That was typical of Archbishop Worlock: quietly behind the scenes beside the wonderful public persona in every positive sense of those words. There were those he would accompany and understand, not least on that final journey.

It is summed up in the fact that, in God's graciousness, next time we hear tonight's reading from Genesis will be at the Easter Vigil. We have sung the Easter Alleluia, we are the people who say yes, in the end death does not have the last word; death is not the final story, there has been victory over death. It seems to me that this is part of the story of Archbishop Worlock, of Bishop David Sheppard and in recent weeks of Grace Sheppard as well. Three people who served truly as much in their dying as in their living. In the words of St Paul 'if we have hoped in Christ for this life only we are of all people the most to be pitied'.

**Ends**  
**8 February 2011**