



Pope to recognise Knock as international Eucharistic shrine

Pope Francis will officially recognise Knock Shrine as an International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine later this month.

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The Pope will deliver a message via video link during mass on 19 March, which will be con-celebrated by Archbishop of Tuam Michael Neary and Parish Priest Fr Richard Gibbons.

Official recognition of the shrine follows Pope Francis' visit to Knock as part of the World Meeting of Families celebrations in 2018.

Last year, the Pontiff declared 2021 as the year of Saint Joseph.

The declaration bears significance for Knock Shrine due to an apparition in 1879 in which St Joseph appeared, together with Our Lady, St John the Evangelist, and the Lamb of God.



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In a statement, Knock Shrine said the apparition scene has deep liturgical meaning, symbolic richness and has been the subject of theological study and contemplation for generations.

"Unique to the Apparition at Knock is the representation of the Eucharist as the risen Lord which appeared as the Lamb on the altar, standing before his Cross and surrounded by a host of angels".

It says this aspect of the Apparition was detailed by 15 witnesses on 21 August 1879.

Cork Bishop: Young people must not be forgotten about in pandemic

Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton has reassured young people that they have not been ‘forgotten’ about in the midst of the global pandemic.

Dr Colton said he recently reached out to young people who were due to receive their confirmation this year just to remind them they are in his prayers.

“I wrote to the pupils on the date they were supposed to get their confirmation. One year on I wanted to reach out to say that you are not forgotten and they are often in my prayers. The last year has been an unknown territory for us all.”

Dr Colton said he sympathises with the huge changes and the many adjustments young people have had to make in the last year.



Bishop Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, pictured against the backdrop of St. Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork.

“The past year has been very tough for lots of people. Their age group in particular has had an especially tough time. Remote learning, not getting into school, not being able to meet up with their friends in the various clubs. The places they would usually go to hang out with friends and to make new ones. These places are all closed.”

Dr Colton said he is still seeking out ways to host the confirmation service for both last year and this year’s recipients.

“I have been trying to figure out how I would go about hosting the confirmation service. We also have a new group of people who should be making plans for their confirmation this year.

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There will be a lot of confirmations to do when we are eventually free to do them.

“The problem is they are among the biggest gatherings every year with families travelling from all over the world. All of this has made pressing on impossible. That will be the case for some time yet unfortunately. I look forward to the time when I will be able to meet the young people for their confirmation.”

Dr Colton said young people need to keep chatting to the people around them if they are finding it tough at present.

“While this is a lonely time, you are not alone. We are all in the same boat. It is not easy at times. Keep talking to the people around you and don’t be afraid to talk about how you are feeling,” he added.

Courtesy of EchoLive.ie. Report by John Bohane

Spring 2021 General Meeting of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference

In accordance with the public health restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid-19, members of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference gathered this week for their Spring 2021 General Meeting *via* video-link, instead of the usual location at Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth.

This was the fourth plenary meeting of bishops hosted using this medium. The President of the Conference is

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Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and the Vice-President is Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin.

During their meeting bishops acknowledged the depth of pain experienced by people whose loved ones have died during this difficult time and offered their prayerful support to families who have suffered due to the restrictions placed on funeral rites and attendance.

Bishops prayed in thanksgiving for the successful visit last week of Pope Francis to Iraq, that it will help bring about peace and reconciliation in the region. Bishops also prayed for the repose of the souls of Father Ragheed Ghanni, and three deacons, who were ambushed and murdered after celebrating Mass in the Holy Spirit Church, Mosul, in northern Iraq on 3 June 2007. Father Ganni had ministered and lived in Ireland, in particular at the pilgrimage site of Lough Derg in the Diocese of Clogher, during his holidays as a student from the Pontifical, Irish College, Rome.

The main issues discussed by the bishops during their Spring General Meeting included:

- **Walking Together – A Synodal Pathway leading to a National Synodal Assembly for the Catholic Church in Ireland**
- **Cardinal Tagle’s address to the Bishops’ Conference and the annual Trócaire lecture**
- **Trócaire’s Lenten Appeal on the impact of conflict on families in South Sudan**
- **Statement on Covid-19 restrictions in the Republic of Ireland**
- **Covid Vaccination Programme**

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- **Saint Patrick's Day and praying for those affected by Covid-19**
- **Welcoming Pope Francis' year dedicated to the family**
- **Call for submissions for a new lectionary for Ireland**
- **Irish Bishops' Drugs and Alcohol Initiative**
- **Prayers for peace following military coup in Myanmar**
- **Appointments**
- ***In Memorium***

Love our Neighbour – Protect our Communities : C of I Archbishops urge members to get the Covid jabs



The Archbishops of the Church of Ireland have issued the following statement in support of the Covid–19 vaccination programmes in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland:

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‘We encourage all Church of Ireland members to take up the opportunity offered by the Covid–19 vaccination programmes currently being rolled out across the island of Ireland. We believe, as Christians, that it is our civic obligation and duty to serve others and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

‘Vaccination against Covid–19 helps to protect individuals in our communities by preventing and reducing illness and death caused by the virus. In the past, vaccines have made a significant difference in society, and they continue to do so. The Covid–19 vaccines are already bringing hope and a possibility of a return to relative normality, and should be made available globally as a priority.



The Archbishop of Armagh was invited by the local Council to plant a tree in the Mall marking the 250th anniversary of the Robinson Library.

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‘The Church of Ireland has, throughout the pandemic, advocated following public health advice from trusted sources, including the [Health Service Executive](https://www2.hse.ie/covid-19-vaccine/) in the Republic of Ireland, see - <https://www2.hse.ie/covid-19-vaccine/>

and [Health and Social Care services](https://covid-19.hscni.net/get-vaccinated/) in Northern Ireland see <https://covid-19.hscni.net/get-vaccinated/>

All who have questions about vaccination are encouraged to consult those sources of information and discuss their questions with health professionals.’



Lunch Bunch@Home for GenBP in Belfast parish

Belvoir Parish have delivered a special Afternoon Tea to their mid-week ‘Lunch Bunch’ who have not been able to meet or eat together since before Christmas.

The initiative was named “Lunch Bunch@Home” and the goodies were prepared by the Secretary of the Select Vestry who runs her own catering business, Table.

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“Lunch Bunch is targeted at GenBP which in Belvoir means Generation Bus Pass,” said the rector, Revd Adrian McCartney. “We delivered Afternoon Tea to 42 homes all round the parish to celebrate the beginning of Spring and to express our hope that a new season is slowly developing around us in all sorts of ways.

“The delight on faces at the door was equalled only by the delight at seeing what was in the box! It felt like we were making a statement that the time to get up and get on is not far away.”

Thy Kingdom Come global prayer movement set to unveil plans for this year at virtual launch event

The organisers of an ecumenical prayer movement for evangelisation, uniting Christians in nearly 90% of countries worldwide from the Ascension to Pentecost, hosted a virtual launch event to unveil plans for this year, on Tuesday 9th March.

Thy Kingdom Come, which is led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and has attracted the support of His Holiness Pope Francis in recent years, will host the free webinar showcasing a selection of new resources and in which ways worshipping communities can participate despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

New resources for 2021 will include an 11-part family-friendly animation series; video reflections from influential Christian voices such as Bear Grylls, Bishop of Dover Rose

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Hudson-Wilkin and Archbishop Angaelos, and this year's Prayer Journal penned by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell.

A special video message from Archbishop Justin Welby, who will be on study leave during this year's 11-day prayer period, will also be shown.

Whilst prayer for evangelisation remains at the heart of Thy Kingdom Come, this year they have adapted their offer, with the intention of creating resources designed to refresh, encourage and inspire worshipping communities, families and individuals who may have struggled with the idea of Church at Home.

For families, there is an 11-part children's video series called Cheeky Pandas – packed with Bible stories, prayers, animation, worship songs and interviews with special guests including Adventurer, Bear Grylls, CBeebies Presenter Gemma Hunt, Revd Nicky Gumbel (HTB and Alpha) and Pastor Agu and Shola (Jesus House) to name a few. The video series (which will be available from early April onwards) can be used as part of church at home, gathered church (online and offline) and in school assemblies. Similar to last year, the series will be the main content in the Family Prayer Adventure Map and App.

For Youth, Thy Kingdom Come are working with the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust to produce a selection of youth resources including a series of video reflections from young influential Christians such as the current Methodist Youth President - Phoebe Parkin, rapper and author -

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Guvna B, Worship Leader- Elle Limebear, Spoken Word Artist- Joshua Luke Smith and many more.

Other new resources include the Prayer Journal, written by the Archbishop of York, - crafted with the express intention of inspiring readers to re-encounter the love and joy found in Jesus Christ and this year's Novena.

The award-winning Thy Kingdom Come app, available in nine languages, will for the first time, include audio content from 24-7 Prayer's Lectio 365 with audio reflections from Pete Greig, Archbishop Justin and 24-7 Prayer GB UK Director, Carla Harding.

Recognising the strain on churches to serve their congregations during the prolonged pandemic context, Thy Kingdom Come are giving away 100,000 copies of the Prayer Journal and Family Prayer Adventure Map to UK churches as long as P&P is covered.

Emma Buchan, Thy Kingdom Come Project Director, said: "I am so excited about TKC this year as we have been so intentional in our planning and thinking to produce resources that help the Church at this time. Where it has been such a challenging year for everyone, we really want TKC to inspire people in their relationships with Christ, to gather those who have found online Church challenging and to resource children and young people in fun, spiritually nourishing ways. We hope and pray Pentecost is a time of great joy after what has been such a challenging season."

The webinar also shared ideas for churches looking to be involved this year –covering all eventualities - whether at churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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home or gathered worship once the restrictions are lifted in the UK, and also to reflect varied global contexts where gathered worship is still possible.

A series of follow up webinars, including sessions specifically for the international context, will be available in March and April.

To find out more about the resources and this year's campaign sign up to our mailing list and visit the website: www.ThyKingdomCome.global

About Thy Kingdom Come

Now in its sixth year, Thy Kingdom Come has grown from an initial call to prayer from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Anglican Communion, to a worldwide ecumenical prayer movement uniting Christians from across 65 different denominations and traditions.

Since the movement began in 2016, the campaign has had a presence in nearly 90% of countries globally, ranging from Malaysia to Malta, Sweden to South Africa, Australia to Albania and Burundi to Brazil, with many countries translating the resources into their own languages such as Gaelic, Maori, Japanese, Arabic, Finnish and Tamil & Sinhala.

Dates for this year's Thy Kingdom Come will take place from the 13th-23rd May.

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Growing the Rural Church goes digital to help rural churches thrive

A new online resource hub to help rural churches ‘grow and thrive’ was launched by the Bishop of Exeter on Monday March 8.

Growing the Rural Church (GtRC) is a Diocese of Exeter pilot project funded by the Church of England’s Strategic Development Fund.

It began in 2017 but is now relaunching following a major re-appraisal of its operational methods during the pandemic.

The resource hub will offer churches across the UK support to plan projects, apply for grants, work with local communities, get help with building maintenance, plan special events and make the most of church festivals.

As well as free tutorial videos and online guidance, there will be regular free webinars throughout the year.

The Growing the Rural Church team also wants to help churches explore innovative uses for their buildings, for example as community work hubs and cafés during the week for people working from home.

Sarah Cracknell, the project manager, said “When the pandemic hit, we couldn’t operate as before, going out to meet church groups face to face.



“We realised that offering support online would enable us to offer the same advice and guidance to a much greater number of rural churches.

“Also, we can connect churches in similar situations with each other through the webinars, so they can work together more easily.”

The Bishop of Exeter, the Right Reverend Robert Atwell, said “Helping our rural churches to grow and flourish is something I am passionate about.

“For centuries our village churches have been at the heart of our communities and now rural life is at a turning point with people rediscovering the ‘gift of local’.

“A healthy church is a sign of a healthy society and the Growing the Rural Church team is here to help with that.”

Sarah said the project was about much more than just preserving church buildings for the future.

“We want to the help churches which see they need to change in order to survive, grow and thrive,” she said.

“We are really excited about the hub launch. This will give churches the essential building blocks to be sustainable but it also has a lot of creative ideas for ‘risk taking’ and growth.”

Sarah said the lifestyle changes forced by the pandemic had given rural churches a renewed opportunity to be at the heart of their communities:

“People are becoming much more committed to their local areas and as a society we have become more aware of the needs of others and the importance of our own wellbeing.

“Rural churches have a unique opportunity to speak into that.

“We are hoping to work with the Devon Work Hubs organisation to encourage churches to offer community work spaces so people don’t just have to work at home alone.

“People are missing that connection with others.”

[[] <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/growing-rural-church/>]

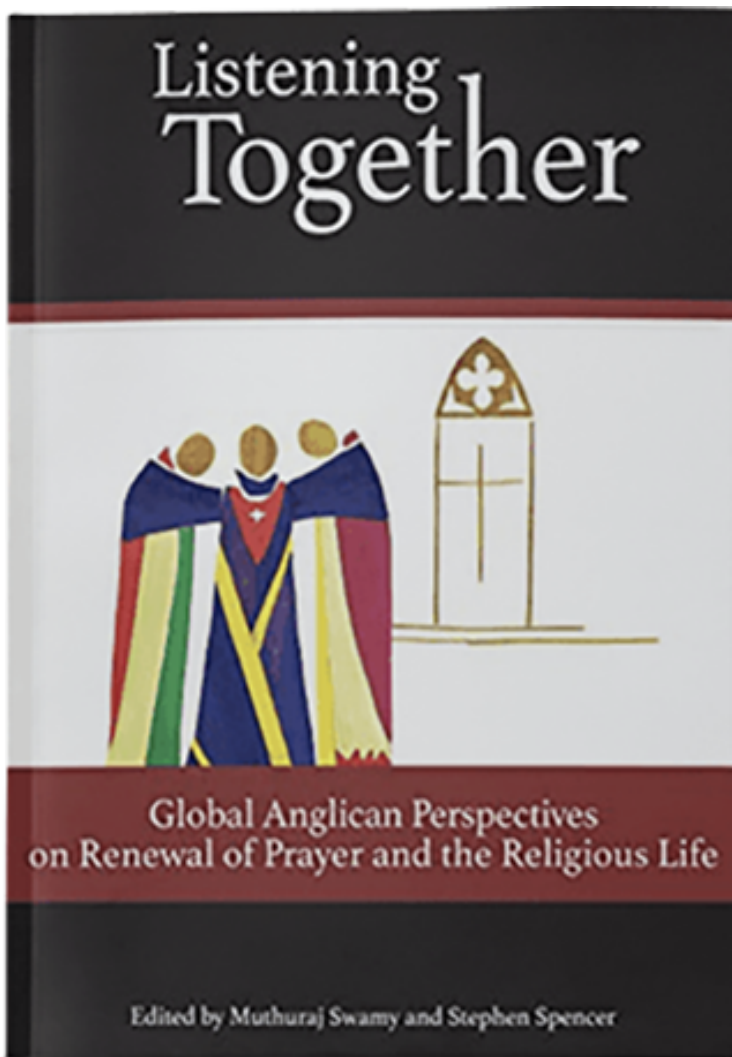
Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars

Bishops to renew "prayer and religious life" ahead of Lambeth Conference

The renewal of prayer and the religious life is explored in the third of three books on the Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry priorities. The series has been produced by the Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (TEAC) department of the Anglican Communion Office to help bishops prepare for the next Lambeth Conference. All bishops in the Anglican Communion are invited to the once-a-decade Lambeth Conference. The next one will be held in Canterbury, England, in 2022, having been postponed from last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The book is based on papers delivered at a Theological Education for Mission in the Anglican Communion conference, held at Saint Paul's University in Limaru, Kenya, in May 2019. Addressing delegates at the time, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "religious communities are an integral part of the church today and in places they are a vibrant part of the church." His personal reflections form the introduction to this volume.

The editors, Dr Muthuraj Swamy and Dr Stephen Spencer, say that the book, *Listening Together: Global Anglican Perspectives on Renewal of Prayer and the Religious Life*, was "written by authors representing a dozen different



nationalities from across the globe, with a similar number of mother tongues and with a majority of voices from the global South”.

The book explores examples of the renewal of prayer in the local church; the theological foundation of renewal for local churches, and religious and monastic communities;

examples of monastic

communities; and examples of innovative religious communities.

Muthuraj Swamy and Stephen Spencer said that the themes that emerge throughout the chapters are “that prayer is much more than making our requests known to God but is about coming into his presence with open minds and hearts, in stillness and with an attitude of listening”, and, “that prayer is something to be done with others, in community, before it is done on one’s own”.

When talking about their hopes for the series of books, they said: “we hope the books will raise the profile of Anglican theology from the global south so that whenever bishops

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and other church leaders are grappling with the big issues of our time they will remember to listen to voices from the global south as well as north. Also that the different chapters in these books will help to form the thinking of bishops who are preparing for the Lambeth Conference in 2022. Finally, that the contributors will be encouraged to keep working in their areas of expertise and publish further work for churches worldwide.”

The three volumes are:

- **Walking Together: Global Anglican Perspectives on Reconciliation**
Available from [Forward Movement](#) and [Amazon](#)
- **Witnessing Together: Global Anglican Perspectives on Evangelism**
Available from [Forward Movement](#) and [Amazon](#)
- **Listening Together: Global Anglican Perspectives on Renewal of Prayer and the Religious Life**
Available from [Forward Movement](#) and [Amazon](#)

Light House Online Theological Training

Pilot Tuesday 23rd March 2021.

Part 1 will be from 11 am to 12.30, then a 30 minute break, followed by Part 2, 1pm to 2.30 pm.

Aim - to explore the relationship between theological understandings of suicide and mental health; and how this then translates into pastoral action.



**Theological Online
Training
Tuesday 23 March 2021
11am to 2.30 pm**

Exploring the relationship between
theological
understandings of suicide and mental
health and how this translates into
pastoral action.

Email info@wewillflourish.com to register.



This training will be delivered via zoom for clergy/ministers of religion. If anyone would like to register onto the course, please email info@wewillflourish.com

www.wewillflourish.com

Media review

Former President of Ireland asked Pope John Paul II to apologize for “sexist” remark

Irish Central

Mary McAleese said Pope John Paul II was "so apologetic" after she challenged him on his "sexist" remark.

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Mary McAleese, the former President of Ireland, says she asked Pope John Paul II to apologize after he made a sexist remark upon their meeting in 1999.

McAleese was asked by panel host Miriam O'Callaghan during a Focus Ireland event for International Women's Day on March 8 if she ever experienced sexism during her political career.

[[] <https://www.irishcentral.com/news/mary-mcaleese-pope-sexist>]

Brexit may mean no kosher meat for Pesach in Northern Ireland

The Jewish Chronicle.

[[] <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/brexit-may-mean-no-kosher-meat-for-pesach-in-northern-ireland-1.512701?>]

Lobbying Washington

Daily Telegraph

A government representative is set to be dispatched to the United States to help counter the EU's efforts to turn President Biden's administration against the UK over its actions in Northern Ireland. A senior official will be seconded to the British embassy in Washington in the coming weeks to help build alliances with Irish Americans and the new administration.

[[] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/03/10/boris-johnsons-eu-counter-offensive-representative-sent-washington/>]

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Leo Varadkar sorry for suggesting that Sinn Fein has no Protestant TDs

Belfast Telegraph

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/leo-varadkar-sorry-for-suggesting-that-sinn-fein-has-no-protestant-tds-40182626.html?>]

Executive has abandoned us, say furious Holyland residents

Belfast Telegraph

Holyland residents have rounded on the First and deputy First Ministers for what they say is a 'wholly inadequate' response to ongoing house parties in the run up to St Patrick's Day. The south Belfast student area is traditionally notorious for revelry at this time of the year, but the situation is more acute because of the pandemic.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/executive-has-abandoned-us-say-furious-holyland-residents-40181797.html?>]

Pointers to Prayer

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the place where we are And transform us by the presence of your Son. In this place, may we encounter the One who embodies your love. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.



God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us at the break of day And be with us in all that lies before us. In the place in which we live, may we see life renewed. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the place of suffering And bring your healing presence among us. In the place of suffering, enable us to reach out to those beside us. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the place of sorrow And bring your light into our darkness. In the place of sorrow, may we become bearers of your light. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us in the rhythm of life And renew hope within
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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us. In the community in which we live, may we bear witness to the God of hope. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

God of Space and Time, Meet us in the place where we are today. Meet us at the close of day And be with us through the night. Keep us safe and bring us to the dawn of a new day. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.



Speaking to the Soul

Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

Luke 10:33-34 NLT

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I love the parable of the Good Samaritan and not least because it would have come as such a complete surprise to Jesus' hearers. Jesus is being challenged by an expert in the law who asks for the legal definition of the word neighbour. I have no doubt that he was expecting a sophisticated technical response – and instead Jesus tells him a story.

To any Jew the parable was deeply shocking. The fact that a man had been ambushed on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho wasn't surprising. The winding road that connected the two communities made it an ideal place to attack a traveller, all so different from the large straight highway that we see today. But what was shocking was that the priest and Levite did nothing. Of course, they had perfect excuses since touching a dying man could have made them unclean and therefore unable to perform their duties in the temple. But even so anyone with any heart would realise that they should have responded to the helpless man. What was astonishing is that Jesus chose to make the hero of the story a Samaritan of all people. The Jews and Samaritans hated one another with a passion and Jesus' decision to focus all the attention on the loving generosity of the Samaritan would have been deeply offensive to his Jewish audience.

Jesus was making a simple and straightforward point. Whoever you are, if you really care for another person you need to do something. Worshipping God is worth nothing if it doesn't lead to loving, caring, costly action.

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QUESTION

Who is your neighbour and what does it mean for you to love your neighbour as yourself?

PRAYER

Lord God our Father, give me your strength and wisdom to enable me to show love to my neighbours today. Amen.

