

Fr Sean.

Fr Sean was first pointed out to me in the mid 70s when I started to attend the Sunday Night Prayer Group in St Mary's Cathedral in Newcastle.

"That's Fr Sean Conaty" I was told, "You want to hear him preach, he's like John the Baptist.

It was about 2 months later that I was taken up one night to be prayed with by him and for reconciliation.. I didn't know what to expect and was feeling very nervous. After I had been to confession he said that he would pray with me. I remember him saying, "Jesus bless this good child," and every time he did I kept saying "I'm not good, you don't know what I'm really like." He said, "Lord take this young girl's hand," and he lifted my hand up, I had never heard anyone speak to Jesus like that. He said to me, "the first time I saw you I thought to myself, she is a good girl."

After that I joined the Longbenton Prayer Group and Fr Sean became my spiritual director. He became a father-figure, whom I opened up to and trusted. He stood by me and walked with me through a long journey of inner healing.

He encouraged, challenged, and corrected me. He saw what I was capable of becoming with God's help.

It was a bumpy ride, as he tried to guide my young mind and I rebelled often. Now 36 years later, and as a leader of that same prayer group myself, I do thank God for Fr Sean's guidance in my life and the wisdom of his ways.

My lasting memory of him is very similar to my first, when his illness became public, I felt God calling me to go and see him for confession and it was a marvellous opportunity, to share things we had never discussed, and bring things up that had never been said, and to hear the pride he felt in watching this young girl develop into a spiritually mature woman. God Bless Him.