

Hexham and Newcastle Catholic Charismatic Renewal



Renewal NorthEast

Issue 54

September 2011

Pat Kennedy writes:

Dear All,

People tell me that Renewal is dead. That everyone who attends a prayer group is parochial to their group and goes to nothing else. I was talking to a well known leader in Renewal lately who told me that he was tired of looking for people with the fire and commitment which he felt towards Renewal, its growth, its promotion and its sharing with others, in order to change their lives as his had been changed.

My experience however, after the death of Fr Sean, has been that Community is not dead. His death has been a catalyst for communication. I have been overwhelmed by the cards and messages I have received from this Diocese around the country, and abroad; all sharing in our loss.

The number at his funeral was phenomenal, many from Renewal from all over the Diocese. The funeral had to be arranged quickly because Bishop Seamus wanted to do it and he was going to Madrid that weekend and so it had to be the following Friday to his death. Consequently I know that there were those who were away or did not find out about it until after the funeral had taken place.

He died suddenly, although it was expected at some point. His prayers were answered. He was tired and ready. He died at home and he died very quickly. Now he is at peace and rest.

He is a great personal loss to me, to the Diocese as a whole and to Renewal as a whole- this is true; but so was the death of Christ. His death and the power of the Holy Spirit brought people together in witness and community.

For all of us, this is what we look for, search for and long for. It takes a decision, involvement and effort. It takes us to move from where we are comfortable, no matter our age, health or distance. We all have something to offer each other.

Witness is needed, presence is needed, self motivation is needed.

Some time ago it was prophesied that Hexham and Newcastle would be the catalyst of the revival in this country. Is this the time? Is this the place? Or was that a mistaken prophesy?

Can we move, can we come together? Can we come out of our local groups and begin to see what we can offer, how we can support each other; witness to what we believe?

Each one of us is called and gifted for the job and we cannot do it alone. Looking to the past gets us nowhere. Let us celebrate what God has done for each one of us.

Two weeks before he died Fr Sean said that we would write each others obituary. I was surprised at the suggestion, but he was serious and so we did. When I had finished his he read it, a glint of a tear came into his eye and he said "Spot on! I wonder if anyone will ever read it?"

It's on the Diocesan Renewal Website.

At least he knows now that people have and will read it.

My hope is that we will continue to come together and **the beginning of this is our Day of Renewal in Sunderland on 26th November in Holy Rosary Church Hall. It is being given by Fr Chris Thomas and Bishop Seamus is coming to spend time with us and say Mass. The Mass will be a thanksgiving for Fr Sean.**

I hope you will be there no matter which part of the Diocese you are in, and bring your group with you if you have one. If not come along yourself, and witness to our Bishop that Renewal is alive and kicking in this Diocese and Fr Sean's work over all these years was not for nothing.

The Minsteracres weekend will go ahead. I will do it myself. Sean was looking forward to it and I don't want to disappoint him by canceling it. Why don't you come and join us?

Thank you for everything and let's carry on the work together. Pat

Annual Weekend Advent Retreat

Minsteracres Retreat Centre, Consett, Co Durham, DH8 9RT

Mrs. Pat Kennedy. MPS.

“Heralds of the Gospel”

Dec 2nd – 4th 2011

NB. Cheques Payable to Diocesan Service Team

Name/s.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code..... Tel.....

Special requirements for residents; diet stairs, willing to share with etc.

.....

NB. Most rooms are twin bedded. Some Double

Full Board; Fri supper (7pm.) to Sunday after Lunch(1pm) £98

Day Visitors ; yes/ no Whole Weekend £58 Sat only £30 incl. tea & Coffee.

- **Residents- bring your own towel and a bible**

Please retain starting and ending times as no other communication will be sent out.

If you require a receipt for the cheque or directions, please send a stamped addressed envelope along with your booking form.

NB. cheque by 1st November to;

Mrs. P. Kennedy, 42, Southwood Gardens. Kenton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3BU

Tel. 0191 2841690

Review of Diocesan Renewal Questionnaire.

Attendance at Healing Masses has dropped considerably so we have not arranged any more as yet.

Attendance at last Day of Renewal was very small and so we have not had any for a while till this year.

It would be helpful if you could fill this in after discussion with your group - or copy it for your group to fill in, - or just fill it in if you receive the newsletter for yourself.

Please return to Pat Kennedy 42, Southwood Gardens Kenton Newcastle. NE3 3BU.

- 1. How can we as your service team serve you at this time?**
- 2. What would you attend?**
- 3. What is missing for you?**
- 4. What needs to be fed/ fired in you?**
- 5. Where are you settling?**
- 6. What do you feel CCR needs to do today?**
- 7 Where do you feel it is today?**
- 8 What can we as Service Team Do as a whole?**
- 9 What can you offer?**
- 10 What can your group offer?**
- 11 What are you prepared to do or to share?**
- 12 What do you think we can do together as a Diocese?**
- 13. Any other comments or suggestions.**

Prayer Group and Healing Information.

Kristina Cooper is advertising Prayer Groups times and contacts in Good News Magazine and is compiling a list for publication.

We would also like to have these on our website plus times venue contact etc. for opportunities for Healing Prayer.

In order to publish such information we need permission under the freedom of Information Act. Therefore could you please fill in this form sign it and send it back to me. Thanks.

Personal Addresses will not be published but contact emails or Tel numbers will.

If you do not want any of this information published then it would still be useful for Paul Copeland to have, as Contact Person for Renewal in our Diocese as he often gets calls for such information. Please indicate below what is your preference. Thanks.

Pat Kennedy, 42, Southwood Gardens. Kenton Newcastle / Tyne NE3 3BU .

I do/ do not give permission for this information to be placed in Good News and on the Diocesan Website.

Prayer Group Name.....

Venue.....

Day/ Time of meeting and ending.....

Contact Person Address.....

.....

..... **Post Code.....**

Contact details; Tel No.....Email.....

We also offer Healing Prayer; Venue.....

Time/ Day.....

All our Healing team are CRBd Yes/ No

Signed..... Date.....

Thanks for your help with This.

Pat

Events at St. Andrew's Church Worswick Street Newcastle upon Tyne

We are having an Intercession Vigil on Friday 9th Sept 9pm-6.00am Saturday.

Hosted by Anawim Prayer Group **Enquiries tel. 0191 2240232**

Morning of Intercessionary Prayer: First Saturday of the month led by Ann Webster (Liddell) at Wycliffe 10am - 1pm All welcome.

Events at St. Joseph's Gateshead [opposite Metro Station]

The Prayer group previously meeting at the Church of the Annunciation will now meet in St. Joseph's Hall on the first Sunday of the month between 7pm - 8.15pm This change will commence in October 2011.

Bible study will be held on the 3rd Sunday of the month between 7pm - 8pm. New members welcome.

Another Notice.

We would like to thank those who send us contributions towards post etc. It keeps our finances going. Without Days of Renewal or Healing Services and the collections taken at these events we are unable to raise our level of finance and therefore unable to bring in good speakers if that is what is required. It is a two way situation. If you would like to send any contribution, send it to me. If by cheque – please make it payable to Diocesan Service Team or DST.

Do you get the Good News Magazine?

The National Service Team are also in need of our support and funding. Good News is a good way of doing this and even if we do not read it or like it, just buying it is contributing towards it. Why not try getting a few and seeing if your group will buy it or sell it to others?

Thanks, Pat.

**Catholic Charismatic Renewal Centre, London PO Box 67138 , SW11 9FD Tel: 020-73525298
(Office open Monday to Friday from 11:30 am to 4 pm)**

Day of Renewal and Reflection

Holy Rosary Parish Centre Arbroath Rd. SR3 3LD Sunderland

(A19/ A690 to Sunderland; over 1 roundabout, church shortly on Right.)

Fr Chris Thomas

“The Power of Change”

November 26th. 10.30am- 4.00pm.

Coffee 10am.

All Welcome

**Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Seamus
Cunningham**

A collection will be taken on the day towards expenses

Sean Conaty RIP Obituary written by Pat Kennedy

The first time I met Sean Conaty we never exchanged a word and yet as soon as I saw him, it was as if something vital that had remained unknown and dead within me, sprang into life and finally found a source of connection.

Sometime later when crisis hit and desperation set in, I sought him out, resulting in my first face to face confession. I expected, and dreaded, shock, condemnation, rejection, anger; but instead I found a God, which until then, in a lifetime of Catholicism, I had never known. I felt love, compassion and acceptance; I found a firm guiding hand that brought me to see something within myself that I had never seen. I found a soul-mate, who through many conflicts, explosions, and many deathly silences when the phone never rang, believed in me enough to take a risk. A risk not many would take but the results and witness of which were blessed and life giving. Not just to me, not just to him, but to so many others also.

I remember someone saying to me in the early days: "You don't want to get too close to Sean Conaty – he can see through you to your very toes!"

He was a public face. Well known in Renewal Circles, locally, nationally and internationally, by the time I came on the scene. People travelled to listen to sermons, talks, seminars, and were never left without something, which challenged, enlightened or healed.

When he began to speak about the God he knew, about the Word he loved; he seemed to grow about two feet and his authority dominated the area in which he spoke. The people hung on his every word, he was held in awe and esteem by many. He was the Sean Conaty we all saw and heard; but the man I was eventually privileged to come to know was a very private person: in the midst of all the people, he served. He was lonely, feeling misunderstood, searching for acceptance, affection, relationship, the encouragement he had never had - and affirmation, long hoped for, of a job well done.

Coming from an Irish farming community, a close family structure, he knew what it was to belong; but the early death of his father, robbed him of much of his natural teenage freedom and development. He felt a responsibility to his siblings and the need to support his mother. Expectations of him were high. His time in boarding school and seminary fed his mind and his joy of learning but he missed a great deal of family support and bonding, a time just to grow and mature as a boy of his age perhaps should, and he therefore tended towards scrupulosity in trying to be as perfect as expectations of him suggested. All of this sense of isolation was exacerbated by his mission to England and eventually to South America.

It was however in South America that his life changed dramatically. Within his fervent vocation to the priesthood he found his Mission of Service to the Word and to God's people in a new way. He discovered lay community, lay friendship, and the priest's role of leadership within collaboration; and in spite of living at times in fear of his life and health, he found a God he had never known before and a love which sustained him throughout his life. He has since been faithful to that God and to the Renewal, where he found, through lay people, his revitalised faith and his call to the present day.

There was nowhere he would not go, no group to which he would not speak, no matter how large or small, of the love of God and his evangelising mission to all, clergy, religious and laity alike, without exception.

On his return to England, his experience of the poor in South America whom he had served, initially caused an anger to rise in him when he saw the comparative life-style of those to whom he had returned. Often that anger would spill over into his teaching and would distract from the message he so eagerly preached.

His enthusiasm, verve and fervour arising from his experience, and consequent message, was shocking even to some of his friends, on his return, and he once again lost the sense of belonging and was left feeling isolated and distanced from those with whom he was in fraternity.

His energies and new found learning went into teaching and building up communities where laity had a role and their vocation was recognised and encouraged. In each of his parishes he called people and gave them a forum for voice, learning and service. This enthusiasm for teaching, enabling and evangelisation never waned; in fact in retirement it gained an even wider expression. His work in retreats and spiritual direction, here and abroad, with clergy and laity including religious, changed the hearts and lives of many. His gift and enthusiasm for languages increased his means of communicating the message and his giftedness in healing, deliverance and exorcism changed the direction and quality of so many people; setting them free from fear, bondage and captivity in so many areas with a confidence and authority which came from his deep assurance that he was carrying out the will of God for his people: "Go and set my people free as you have been freed."

At home the telephone never stopped - people ringing with problems, large and small, all hours of the day and night, seeking Masses, prayers over the phone, advice or just to hear the sound of his voice speaking into their own isolation and pain.

Sean was a very free man. We worked together over a long period of time. We became friends, soul mates and mutual sources of support and advice. He had no problem with being friends with a woman. He would say, "My reputation others may take but no one can take our integrity."

He was a very "simple" man in the sense that deviousness and manipulation were unknown to his experience. He was very "choosy" about food and what he ate. His diet was quite limited (even though healthy).

Once while giving a retreat in Scotland we took time out for personal reflection and prayer in Nunraw Abbey. On the way back to Portobello we stopped in Haddington. It was a Sunday and we were looking for somewhere to eat. I found a hotel open and went to see what it was like. Sean was looking in a shop window at the selection of whiskies.

I knew as soon as I went in that this restaurant would not do. It was not clean and it smelled strongly of tobacco smoke, but unfortunately there was no one else in and the waitress ran towards me with a menu. Sean arrived through the door. I walked towards him my eyes looking straight into his - giving a long steady gaze; hoping he would pick up the message. I said to him, "I have looked at the menu Sean so I think we should go and **find the others** and tell them what is on it and see what they say!!" I headed towards the door, smiling at the waitress. Sean didn't move; he didn't pick up any message; he looked at me and said: "Ok you go and tell them and I'll wait here!" I eventually got him outside and in the reality of his response we lay on a wall and laughed until we cried; so much so a policeman came over to see if we were ok and to find out what the joke was.

Within our midst we truly had a giant of a man who lived for and with his people and his family, throughout his life, wherever he was; a man whose constant message in good health and lately in sickness was: "Do not be sad...the joy of the Lord is your stronghold...and then all the people went off to eat, drink and give shares away...since they had understood the meaning of what he had proclaimed to them" Nehemiah 8;12

And this surely has to be his legacy to us all.

Pat Kennedy July 2011

