

COME DOWN; HURRY, BECAUSE I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY

COME DOWN; HURRY, BECAUSE I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY. As you know, I live in Portsmouth at the Cathedral and in the evenings I like going out for a short walk; I often say the Rosary. Since childhood, I've always loved the night sky, looking at the stars: I've got a fantastic app on my phone that you can point at the sky and it identifies for you all the constellations! But in the city, the traffic, the streetlights, the shops are so bright, you can barely see the Moon let alone any stars. The secular world we live in today is a bit like that; it's full of great potential, wonderful things; it makes life busy, absorbing, bright. But like the city lights, it can easily block out the sacred canopy of God, heaven, happiness and the most important things in life. This is why it's great to be here today for this Y2K retreat, Swell@Bournemouth. --Because in our time the Church is calling us to the work of new evangelisation. But let me come back to that in a moment.

First, a word about the Gospel we've just heard, about Zacchaeus who was anxious to meet Jesus passing by but he was short, so he climbed a tree to get a better view. It's a great story, if you ever wanted a bible passage to pray about! But I'm interested in what happened when Jesus said: ZACCHAEUS, COME DOWN; HURRY, BECAUSE I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY. For when Zacchaeus did come down, when he saw Jesus face to face, when he met him in Person, his heart gave way. He melted. Meeting Jesus changed his life: I'M GOING TO GIVE away half of everything I own, to the poor! If I've swindled anyone, I'll repay them four times! In other words, when he came down from his perch and met Jesus face to face, Jesus changed his life. He was "converted"; he became a new man, a disciple, a loving member of Christ's Church.

A few moments ago, Will spoke about evangelisation; we also heard some amazing testimonies. To evangelise means to tell people about Jesus, to spread the Gospel, to witness to our Catholic Faith. In today's Western world, JP2 spoke about the need for a new evangelisation, one that's new in its ardour, new in its methods and new in its expression. Now you can't give what you haven't got, which is why evangelisation is always a two-way activity: reaching-in and reaching-out. It's like a heart beating. Or better, think of breathing: breathing in and breathing out. Evangelisation is two-way: it's first

about you and me being evangelised, being fired up, being filled with the love of Jesus, and it's also about reaching out to others, finding new ways and new methods. Think of how fire catches: if we are ablaze, others will be ablaze too.

As this very moment, Jesus is passing by. This is why I want to end by telling you something that has really changed my life. To be a priest, you have to know lots of theology, and rightly so. But even St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest theologian ever, at the end of his life, broke down at Mass one day saying: It's all straw! Theory is one thing, but the reality of meeting Jesus another. What's really changed my life is spending each day an hour of prayer with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Meeting Jesus face to face is life-changing. It really brings me down off my perch. So I say to you: come down from your perch and find a church. Find the Tabernacle. Find a few minutes each day to meet Jesus face to face in the Holy Eucharist. As with Zacchaeus, it will really change your life. So COME DOWN! Jesus is passing by and this is urgent. HURRY, BECAUSE he wants to STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY.