

Two or three in my name

For where two or three are gathered in my name

A long time ago I was a student with the freedom of the Summer Holidays. Only 17 years of age I followed the example of my mother and joined a Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. The site where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette.

I went to help. I went to be a part of a group of people who cared. I went to give expression to my faith.

I did not go alone

Christ had called over a thousand people. I do not remember the numbers exactly, as we travelled by train and ferry. As we moved people and luggage, and made friends. As we arrived in this strange small town of hospitals and hotels and sanctuaries.

I learned so much.

Speaking to the sick, not as victims but as partners. Taking pride in the work that I did, and the teams I was a part of. This festival of care included the bars at night, and the hangovers in the morning. There were moments of solemn silence and focus. There was the adventure of the new.

My 17 year old self witnessed all these people gathered together in the name of love

And there was Christ among them

Not very far from here in Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, I worked with a very good man called Paul Cash.

He was the scout leader in the Parish, and a man who served for no other reason than the joy and liberation of the children.

In those days school fields were not fenced off for fear of the boggy man. We had a very basic parish hall that was beneath the church, with kitchens, toilets, tables and chairs.

Thus because Paul cared and had the charisma and determination, it was here that we had the Blackburn Cub Scout five a side competition.

Volunteers were called together to produce food. To produce teams. To produce timetables. To prepare football nets and to referee games.

The television crews were not there. We did not get into the national press.

But those who were there to work, had come to make this a special day for the children.

They had come for love

And there was Christ among them

Here in this parish we have arranged for regular coach trips to different parts of the North West. We have been to a one horse town that did not have a hoarse. But equally we have been to a bustling City of Chester. We have been to a Lakeland town where you accessed the public toilets with a credit card. We have journeyed along the motorway to York, to Liverpool.

We have sought out Lemon Curry Chutney in Skipton Market, and so far have left nobody behind.

The preparation involves volunteers who take the booking and sort out the money

The day involves each person making the effort to get up, and get out.

The fun is dependent upon the good will of each person on the coach.

They are there to celebrate life

They are there to support each other

They have come for joy

They have come for love

And there is Christ among them.

And there is Christ among them.

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Our faith is a faith of community

Our faith is expressed in community

Our faith is strengthened in community

For where two or three are gathered in my name

There I am among them.