

Bishop Julian writes a special message to the Diocese ...

The churches of the Diocese have been extraordinary in rising to the challenge of four days of mission activities. The Deanery and the Diocesan teams have coordinated more than 450 different events, large and small, and welcomed Bishops and their teams from the Northern Province.

We thank God for a massive amount of effort and energy and prayer, poured into these opportunities.

All this has been based on the conviction found in that promise in Isaiah 55, that when the Lord's Word goes forth, it will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish that for which He sent it.

That's our confidence, but our task is to be faithful in sowing the seed, passing on the message of Jesus to others, and then trusting God to do His work. He is the One who gives new birth and makes a new creation. Becoming a Christian is something God does in us, not something we do for Him.

While many of our events have drawn good crowds and it has been encouraging to welcome those on the fringe of church or without a faith to hear and have the opportunity to respond to the Gospel, others have been more disappointing when only church people and no visitors have been present.

That tells us something about the toughness of the task facing us and the need for good connection with the communities we serve. Perhaps we have learned lessons about the courage needed to invite people to things and the importance of prayerful expectation. People usually don't just turn up. It is a spiritual battle.

So there is lots to thank God for, while at the same time lots to learn. There has been a real buzz around the diocese, as we have experienced afresh the joy of seeking to make Jesus Christ more widely known and loved and trusted.

My prayer is that we do not all heave a sigh of relief and say Crossroads is over, but rather continue to be engaged in the business of obeying Jesus' command, when He said: 'Go and make disciples of all nations...'

What is the next thing: an act of service, an explanation of what it means to be a Christian, you are planning for those who do not yet believe?

Bishop Julian