

Bishop of Blackburn – New Year Message 2019

In August, I wrote an article for a local newspaper about drugs and the danger of drug addiction; the chaos that drugs bring to people's lives.

It's frightening when we see on our television screens pictures of people of all ages, including the young, standing in a street as if frozen and not able to move, while affected by a drug which they have recently taken.

After the article appeared I had a response from a family here in Lancashire, who told me something of their experience of drug addiction and the difference that they were trying to make to people's lives. They had developed creative and innovative ways of helping people out of addiction into a more ordered and patterned way of life.

As we look forward to a new year ahead of us I pray that it may be one in which we know something of the order that God longs to bring into our lives.

Yes, there's a sense in which there are only a few who get caught up in that drug world and experience that level of chaos, but all of us in one way or another can find there's a level of disorder to our lives that needs to be brought into a pattern; within certain boundaries.

At the moment we are living in a time of political chaos and who knows where the Brexit negotiations are going to end up as we enter into 2019.

I'm sure we all wish for a level of pattern and order, stability, in our political life as we move forward.

Whatever our relations are going to be with the European Union we want order; so it is also in our personal lives that we should seek to live in a way that brings peace and comfort not just to ourselves but to those with whom we live.

Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness, but that does not create a free market in which we choose to do what we want, when we want.

Rather, it creates a life that is patterned and ordered by His commandments and His directions.

So, as I wish you God's blessing for a very Happy New Year, I also pray that each of us may find something of the order and pattern in our lives that God longs to give to each of us.