

# Cairns help us to find direction

BY BISHOP JONATHAN, BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH



I HAVE a younger brother, Daniel. His ability in maths and art and his love for people led him towards a career in architecture. I never cease to be amazed by his skill in creating spaces that enable people to live well together. A most unpromising situation can be transformed and renewed as a living environment, through his skill in reimagining space.

This 'space-making' enables fresh light to break through. The most unpromising of environments is drenched in light to become a joyful human-shaped space to live in. Something like this is at the heart of my vision for the spiritual rejuvenation of our diocese through the development of Cairns.

Walkers will know that a physical cairn is a way-marker, usually a pile of rocks or stones, that helps pilgrims regain or confirm their sense of direction. This can be spiritually true for us too: St Peter describes the first Christians as 'living stones', being built together in Christ (1 Peter 2:5).

My vision for our diocese is that there will be a host of little Christian communities – spiritual cairns if you like – springing up in every context and situation. St Benedict spoke of Christian community as a school in Christ's service: our vision for Cairns does the same job! Little Christian communities of men and women coming regularly together to pray,

eat together and do 'gospel work'.

What do I mean by gospel work? It's not a group meeting without intent. Rather, in a Cairn we will encourage each other as we follow Jesus Christ, by praying through Scripture, focusing on a Christian text or perhaps taking a course together.

On some occasions, encouraging and reviving one another in faith may mean carrying one another's burdens or supporting one another through a difficult chapter in life. Like a physical cairn out on a hillside, these little groups made up of Christians across the diocese will create space for the light and grace of Christ to minister to us.

So do please be bold. Link up with three or four friends and companions in your parish or situation to establish a Cairn. Make space for the Holy Spirit to meet you in community. Meet at least monthly for a couple of hours.

Its structure? Prayer, food, gospel work. For the prayer element I strongly suggest and commend the ancient and simple practice of Lectio Divina, already used by the Bishop's Staff Team. Please see [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/cairns](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/cairns) for resources and contact Neil Smart, our Lead for Revive. Do go for it, and let me know how you get on. I shall be praying for you.

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