

## Salford priest addresses challenges of addiction

Fr James McCartney talks about project helping more than 200 ex-drug abusers to recover from addiction.



*Fr James McCartney with Gavin Morton, Mona Street Project project manager, Mark Gilman of the National Treatment Agency, Nigel Preston of Salford City Council and Phil Valentine, founder of the CCAR*

A priest from the Diocese of Salford has spoken passionately about the importance of developing “recovery communities” at an event to mark the launch of a pioneering project.

Fr James McCartney, chief executive of the Blackburn-based charity **THOMAS**, talked about the challenge of turning people away from “the chaos of addiction” during a keynote speech to statutory and voluntary sector organisations.

Fr McCartney and **THOMAS** are spearheading an initiative called the Mona Street Project, which provides recovery programmes and community and residential rehabilitation for more than 200 addicts across the city of Salford.

The project involves former offenders, who have graduated through **THOMAS**, working alongside seconded staff from Salford Community Leisure to help other substance misuse offenders turn away from drug and alcohol addiction and crime. Fr McCartney, parish priest at the Sacred Heart in Blackburn, said: “We are trying to help people turn away from the chaos of addiction by providing

recovery programmes and community and residential rehabilitation through the Mona Street Project.

“After a successful pilot, we are now case managing over 200 addicts and the hope is this will become a blueprint for recovery nationally.

“THOMAS graduates are working with staff from Salford Community Leisure to help other substance misuse offenders turn away from a life of drugs, alcohol and crime.”

Phil Valentine, founder and chief executive of the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery ( **CCAR**) also spoke about his personal battle with alcohol and cocaine addiction during the conference at Salford Cathedral Centre.

Mark Gilman, recovery lead for the National Treatment Agency, discussed the work his organisation carries out nationally around recovery.

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