

Frank's first interview

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3 **Interviewer:** What do you believe about God?

4 **Frank:** About God. Um – knows all. Um – friendly, obviously. There
5 for help. Ah, to make sure everything runs smoothly. Creator.
6 Um – yeah.

7 **Interviewer:** That's good. Have you always thought about God like that?

8 **Frank:** Yeah.

9 **Interviewer:** If you think right back into primary school, as far as you can go.

10 **Frank:** Yeah, there was always like ... at the same time to be thankful.

11 **Interviewer:** You've used some words to describe God. What about images?

12 **Frank:** Images? Um – well – said we were made in God's image, but
13 the story of creation is only a story and so – um – I dunno, it just
14 – it's more of a feeling of him being there rather than actually
15 seeing him.

16 **Interviewer:** And when you were little?

17 **Frank:** Aw, you always think just a person, another person.

18 **Interviewer:** Okay. Can you recall anything from your past where you –
19 when I say this to you, you remember, or think you remember,
20 "Aw I used to think of God as being like this"?

21 **Frank:** Aw, a light. Yeah.

22 **Interviewer:** A light?

23 **Frank:** A bright light.

24 **Interviewer:** Okay. So in what ways do you think your faith in God today
25 differs from what it was some years ago?

26 **Frank:** Um – what you ask for. Yeah, when you're little, you – um – just
27 – the things that seem to matter at the time, like what you want
28 the material items an' things like that – um – you'd be asking
29 God for that an' you'd wonder why you wouldn't get some of
30 these bad things. But – um – yeah – didn't really think of any
31 deeper meaning or anything of real sense of help to get through
32 life.

33 **Interviewer:** What about Jesus? Is Jesus different from God?

34 **Frank:** Um – (pause) not really. I mean he came to help us here. And
35 the Trinity's a very, yeah, confusing thing.

36 **Interviewer:** We're going to get on to the Holy Spirit. At the moment, it's just
37 Jesus and God and whether you see a difference and I think you
38 said, 'Not really.'

39 **Frank:** No, I don't see any difference.

40 **Interviewer:** Okay. Was there any time in the past when there was a
41 difference?

- 42 **Frank:** Um – mm – don't think so. I'm just trying to think if I did. (Pause)
43 No, I don't think so.
- 44 **Interviewer:** Okay. What about the Holy Spirit? How would you explain the
45 Holy Spirit to a friend who doesn't believe in God?
- 46 **Frank:** Um (long pause) – the physical thing's the flame. The – um –
47 sense that we're given to be good to one another, I would see
48 that more as the Holy Spirit. So, what God gives us as help be
49 the Holy Spirit.
- 50 **Interviewer:** Okay, so if you had to explain Jesus to a friend who wasn't a
51 believer, what would you say about Jesus?
- 52 **Frank:** Ah, he took the human form, came down to earth – um – to
53 correct things that were going wrong. Ah – to guide people the
54 right way in life. Ah – yeah.
- 55 **Interviewer:** Okay, good. I want to move on to talking about prayer. I have
56 these sorts of questions: Do you pray? To whom do you pray?
57 How often do you pray? How do you pray? What sort or form
58 does your prayer take?
- 59 **Frank:** Well, yeah, I pray. Um – usually, when you have like a moment.
60 We have – um – a sense for God, – um – so if something
61 worked really well, well, or something you've been trying to
62 achieve for a long time happens. Um – and then there's every
63 Sunday you pray. Ah, what were the other ones?
- 64 **Interviewer:** To whom do you pray?
- 65 **Frank:** Um – God, ah – Mary for intercession. Um – Callistus, my saint
66 from my Confirmation. Um – St Anthony 'cause I lose things
67 quite often. Um – and also I'm in St Anthony's. Um – (pause) –
68 yeah, I'd say that'd be it.
- 69 **Interviewer:** Okay.
- 70 **Frank:** Ah – and also St Philip and St Juliana.
- 71 **Interviewer:** So, what sort of prayers do you pray?
- 72 **Frank:** Ah – thanks. Um – asking to look after people in the family. Ah
73 – for guidance – um – just help to be strong. And to be more
74 like Jesus.
- 75 **Interviewer:** So these are prayers that you compose for yourself? So the
76 words are your own words?
- 77 **Frank:** Yeah. An' then there's also, y'know – um – the Hail Mary, the
78 prayer for intercession.
- 79 **Interviewer:** Okay, good. So, to whom do you pray most often? God?
80 Jesus? the Holy Spirit?
- 81 **Frank:** Mm – um – to God.
- 82 **Interviewer:** Okay. Why the grin when I mentioned the Holy Spirit?

- 83 **Frank:** Y'know, it's just the whole trilogy idea. It's just so hard to grasp.
84 I mean, yeah, it's like eternity. There's always a beginning and
85 never an end. It's so confusing.
- 86 **Interviewer:** How does your belief in God influence or shape the way you live
87 your life?
- 88 **Frank:** Um – the try and be good to other people. Um – you jus' try and
89 live up to God's expectations, what he asks us to be. Yeah.
90 And also the – the way in which you tackle a problem in not
91 going at it alone, feeling you have help.
- 92 **Interviewer:** So, when you're saying not going it alone are you referring to
93 God being with you?
- 94 **Frank:** Yep.
- 95 **Interviewer:** What about the impact of your faith on your attitude towards
96 suffering?
- 97 **Frank:** Um – kind of confused. You know, it's – it's – there's gotta be a
98 reason for it to happen, I mean, – or else God wouldn't let it
99 happen. But just why – why did it have to happen? It's – it's
100 confusing.
- 101 **Interviewer:** Okay. Does your faith help you with that confusion?
- 102 **Frank:** I just let it be. Forget it. It is what it is. There's gotta be a
103 reason for it.
- 104 **Interviewer:** What about your attitude towards death?
- 105 **Frank:** Um – not scared because I mean, everybody's got to die
106 sometime and, I mean, that's the after life, so it's not the end.
107 Yeah. You still got something else to know after that.
- 108 **Interviewer:** Okay, so there's no burning ambition that would want to keep
109 you alive and so your death would prevent you from achieving
110 that ambition?
- 111 **Frank:** Oh, I'm gonna stay here for as long as I can. I'm not just gonna
112 give up. But – um – yeah – I'd like to stay here for quite a while.
- 113 **Interviewer:** But it's that understanding that death is part of life?
- 114 **Frank:** Yeah.
- 115 **Interviewer:** Alright. So in what way do you think your faith helps you, or
116 helps to give your life purpose and meaning?
- 117 **Frank:** Um – well, for a start, there is a meaning; we're not just here for
118 no reason at all an' we live an' die like animals. Um – that
119 there's a purpose, I mean, if you went through life thinking there
120 wasn't a purpose to being here an' there wasn't a meaning
121 afterwards, or whatever, um – the way you'd live your life it may
122 be different. You may not try to live it the best you can, be as
123 good as you can.
- 124 **Interviewer:** So do some of your friends not see life like that?

- 125 **Frank:** Um – yeah – Most of my friends aren't very practising Catholics,
 126 um. But – um (pause) – um – they're – they're not atheists or
 127 anything like that against – Atheists, that's against God isn't it?
- 128 **Interviewer:** Yeah.
- 129 **Frank:** They're not against God. They're – um – they don't knock me
 130 for – they just – um – they – they're good blokes, just in a
 131 different – a different way.
- 132 **Interviewer:** Okay. So we move on from just your beliefs now to looking at
 133 events in your life that have led to changes in your relationship
 134 with God. What have people said or done that's contributed to
 135 or not contributed to your relationship with God?
- 136 **Frank:** There's got to be a lot that my Mum has said. Can't remember
 137 any particulars, but – um – she has real strong faith. I guess
 138 that would encourage me to be the same. Um –
- 139 **Interviewer:** We'll come to talk about your Mum later.
- 140 **Frank:** Ah – I'm sure there has been, but I just can't think of any.
- 141 **Interviewer:** Okay. No events in your life?
- 142 **Frank:** My memory isn't very good. Um (pause) I know there would be.
- 143 **Interviewer:** You said Callistus was your Confirmation name. So why did you
 144 choose that name?
- 145 **Frank:** To be different (laughter) 'cause there was all the normal saints
 146 that everyone had already heard of an' I saw Callistus and' I
 147 hadn't heard that name before. So I thought, "Here we go. I'll
 148 choose this bloke." But – um – I read up about him. He's pretty
 149 good.
- 150 **Interviewer:** So what do you remember of him?
- 151 **Frank:** Um – he was Pope an' I'm pretty sure that in those days if you
 152 were Pope you were – Is it "canonised?" You become a saint?
- 153 **Interviewer:** Yes. Most of them.
- 154 **Frank:** If he wasn't Pope, it probably wouldn't have happened. He was
 155 sent to the salt mines for a while. I can't remember why. Did
 156 something which wasn't really wrong. I think they wanted him
 157 out of the way. But someone rescued him, some woman. I'm a
 158 bit shaky on it. But – um – there was a lot of fighting in that time.
 159 It was around the same century as the Servite Brothers was
 160 formed. Um – it was in – it was in Italy. Yeah, and there was a
 161 lot of fighting – um – and he just tried to make peace. And there
 162 was some other guy – um – can't remember his name. He was
 163 like a – like the bad guy. He – um – he wanted to be Pope but –
 164 yeah – for all the wrong reasons. Um – an' Callistus got – I
 165 thought – shot but he died in a rally in the town square. Yeah –
 166 um – he wasn't Pope for very long, but he tried to do his best an'
 167 he did a fair bit o' good.

- 168 **Interviewer:** Okay. Um – so you chose that name because it was different.
 169 And the things that you recall are all about conflict and staying
 170 firm in faith despite the conflict and despite the hardship. Is that
 171 how you see your faith?
- 172 **Frank:** That'd be a pretty big part of it, to try an' stay with your faith
 173 during conflict. Um – I s'pose life's full of lots of conflicts. So it
 174 would be a bigger part.
- 175 **Interviewer:** Has anyone reinforced that for you, or any event happen that's
 176 reinforced that?
- 177 **Frank:** Um – Mum would a lot, I s'pose. She's my foundation, the
 178 centre part of my faith. Um – I do remember one thing. We
 179 were at a neighbour's place once. And had these people
 180 around. The kids were brats. And we were little ones as well.
 181 And these other kids were pickin' on us. Um – the fact had been
 182 built into us to – to let things slide an' not – yeah – turn around
 183 an' beat the other kids up. An' so we did let it slide. I mean, I
 184 wish I coulda (laughter) shown those kids because I could've.
- 185 **Interviewer:** I'm sure that story will come back later. Has your faith grown
 186 stronger or weaker in the last twelve months?
- 187 **Frank:** Um – my faith goes on an' off a lot. I mean, I have moments
 188 where I'm – I'm really into it. Um – I mean, something might just
 189 hit me at Church. Um – y'know, I have times when I just don't
 190 give it much time, I can't be bothered. But – um – it's been
 191 reasonably strong I'd say in the last twelve months 'cause, I
 192 mean, tryin' to get through the TEE – um – hasn't been easy.
 193 I've had a lot of – there's a lot of deci- decisions to be made
 194 around this time, like y' future, what to do, um – so I been – I
 195 been askin' God "What about that work? What – what am I
 196 supposed to do? What's my – my calling?" Um – yeah – it
 197 would be growing – would be pretty strong at the moment.
- 198 **Interviewer:** What has been the impact of the school on your faith?
- 199 **Frank:** Ah, I'd say pretty big. Um – you notice when you having a
 200 trouble that things like that, that – um – that problem might crop
 201 up at Church and in RE. I – it happens quite often, it's kinda
 202 scary. It's not intentional, but – um – yeah –
- 203 **Interviewer:** So what happens at school supports the reflection that's going
 204 on in your life?
- 205 **Frank:** Yeah. And we do a lot of reflecting in RE. We sit there and talk
 206 and – um – if anyone has any problems, or anything, it's just
 207 talked about. What's said in the class stays in the class.
- 208 **Interviewer:** Okay. I hope to come back to that. Have there been any
 209 significant people or moments in your school life that have led to
 210 changes in the way you think about or relate with God?
- 211 **Frank:** Mrs Thomas, my current RE teacher. She's really good. She
 212 helps you to keep calm and – um – maintain that relationship

213 with God. Um – there was one, Mrs Callan, absolute reverse.
 214 She was an RE teacher. She should not be an RE teacher.
 215 She was shocking. Um – she abused me mentally, but nothing
 216 beyond that. But – um – yeah, jus’ – I mean it didn’t really affect
 217 my relationship with God too much. It was – um – I knew it
 218 wasn’t useful. But just thinking “What are y’ doing?” She – to
 219 punish me once she – she was gonna make me write out a page
 220 of the Bible – a couple of pages of the Bible. An’ – um – I wrote
 221 into the school, said – you know – questioned the use of the
 222 Bible in that manner as a punishment an’ I didn’t get the
 223 punishment. Yeah – it – um – very slight impact. I didn’t let it do
 224 anything.

225 **Interviewer:** What about the impact of Mrs Thomas? Could you say more
 226 about that?

227 **Frank:** Um – the way she lives her life. Um – when she has a problem
 228 she – ah – turn the other cheek. An’ she – um – she’s very good
 229 an’ she’s so strong, y’ know, it’s – it’s amazing watching her. It
 230 makes you feel good. Um – an’ she jus’ – she doesn’t think
 231 anything of it. Yeah. She – she doesn’t - think there’s any
 232 other way. She’s so strong in her faith. Yeah. Fantastic to see,
 233 though.

234 **Interviewer:** So she’s a good role model?

235 **Frank:** Oh, yeah. Yep.

236 **Interviewer:** What have your parents said or done that has prompted you to
 237 move closer to God, or maybe even away from God?

238 **Frank:** Um – Mum’s constant encouragement to – um – to maintain the
 239 relationship and to – to be strong with God. Um – (long pause)
 240 – um –

241 **Interviewer:** How does she encourage you to maintain the relationship?

242 **Frank:** Well, it’d mainly be in the younger years, I mean. Now it’s the
 243 fact that I could feel that if I wasn’t it would hurt her – um – like
 244 with Church – I – ah – mainly go for Mum. I mean – um – yeah
 245 – I know it’s a poor excuse to deter you from going, but we had a
 246 bad priest for a while. Um – we had a really good priest, Fr Pat,
 247 then we had another priest –um – who – his sermons were the
 248 same thing that twenty times – an’ it was – dragged on. And
 249 now we’ve got Fr Vince and he’s brilliant. He – um – he’s a top
 250 bloke. He’s fantastic. Um – yeah. So I’ve started to enjoy
 251 Church again. Yeah. If – if I didn’t go – my parents don’t put
 252 pressure on me to go. I mean, they believe it should be
 253 something of your own choice an’ the – unless there is no real
 254 purpose to it. But – um – I mainly stuck to it all that time
 255 because I knew it would disappoint my parents an’ – um – I’ve
 256 seen my brother an’ sis- – or Damien for a while, but mainly
 257 because – um – because he worked late, didn’t go to Church.
 258 Um – but the others, yes, they’re not really going that much, but
 259 – and so they give me the option not to, but I choose to. Um –

260 yeah, it just – I mean, it – Mum’s a lot like Mrs Thomas in her
 261 faith, just so strong like, an’ she wants us to be as well. Um – so
 262 it’d be by example for Mum. For Dad – um – I know he doesn’t
 263 seem to have that much and it still – it’s part of his – it’s part of
 264 his life. But – um – (long pause)

265 **Interviewer:** Lived rather than spoken?

266 **Frank:** Yeah. Must more – more “I want to be a good person and to live
 267 it like – yeah, to live your life in that manner, not – not so much
 268 to be churchy.” Yeah – um – Damien – I’ve always looked up to
 269 Damien in everything. He’s my only brother. Um – an’ he’s
 270 done well, so he’s a good role model. But he was an altar boy. I
 271 became an altar boy. I always – always copied Damien. Um –
 272 an’ I s’pose Church is always – when I was little, it was a big
 273 family thing an’ we’ve got – all our family went to the same
 274 Church, so there was – the back pew was – yeah – us. Big
 275 family. Um – two – two sets of cousins it was. So it was three
 276 families an’ my granma. So it was – it was a big family thing an’
 277 granma an – an – everyone else used to , but when we had that
 278 – the priest who wasn’t so good, they – um – stopped coming to
 279 Church. Now it’s Mum, Dad, me an’ granma. Oops! Sorry,
 280 granma an’ I. An’ – um – yeah, everybody used to come around
 281 after Church an’ say – sometimes they’d talk about the sermon
 282 an’ stuff, but – um – usually it’d just be catch up time for the
 283 family. An’ that – that still happens with the four of us. But – um
 284 – yeah, so it’s – it’s just been a – it’s always good feel Sundays,
 285 how it was, an’ how it is, I s’pose, but just not as much.

286 **Interviewer:** So your brother and your sisters are no longer at home?

287 **Frank:** Um – Damien’s not. He’s in London. Um – Paula’s in Holland.
 288 Amy an’ Marie are at home. Um – Marie had a real rough patch
 289 in her life. Um – an’ the whole feeling deserted by God kinda
 290 thing that some people have. An’ that’s – I s’pose that’s – that’s
 291 kinda strengthened me more than – um – that (long pause)

292 **Interviewer:** She had that when she was at school?

293 **Frank:** Mmm, yeah. Um – so her – her life without – without realising
 294 God’s there has been difficult for her an’ – um – I’ve – I’ve tried
 295 to help her out. I gave her the “Footprints” – yeah. An’ – um –
 296 an’ I just try – try an’ help her a bit. She won’t go to Church.
 297 She – she feels hard done by. I mean, she’s done well, she’s
 298 had it really hard. Um – an’ Amy, she’s just – she’s never really
 299 been that way. She’s – she can’t see the point in it. An’ she’s a
 300 good person, more like Dad, doesn’t really see the Church side
 301 of it, or the point, so she wouldn’t really influence me much.
 302 Yeah.

303 **Interviewer:** Is there anything that you would want to say that’s occurred to
 304 you and that I haven’t asked you?

305 **Frank:** Um – (pause) – not really. Although retreats – yeah. They have
 306 worked. You have time to reflect and everyone’s really good on

307 retreats. They don't – um – an' they listen to what everyone else
308 is saying. Retreats are always good an' – an' they – an' they
309 have a nice balance. It's not completely immersed an' that, an'
310 so you have time to get away from it an' relax. Um – I've had
311 two retreats, one in primary school – and that was an optional
312 one, but, I mean, we kinda made it a fun camp as well. Mr Fry –
313 he was a good teacher – he – um – he – s'pose he would be a
314 good influence – he organised the retreat an' the – like I was
315 really good mates with Mr Fry so I got him to do a few other
316 things. We did archery and a few other things like that.
317 (laughter) Um – yeah, that was – that was pretty good. An' the
318 Year 12 retreat was really good. we didn't get our Year 11
319 retreat. That was taken away, but – um – the other retreats
320 were good.

321 **Interviewer:** Okay. Thanks, Frank. We'll stop the interview here. Thankyou.
322 I've enjoyed listening to you reflect on your life and your faith. I
323 would like to interview you again later and invite you to reflect
324 further on some of the things you have shared with me today.