Case Study – Father Paul Lomas

Headline: “My congregation thought they had a new parish priest”

When Roman Catholic priest Father Paul Lomas decided to take part in a diet for the BBC’s *The Big Crash Diet Experiment*, he had many health concerns.

The 64-year-old priest said: “I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes 18 months previously and started on two lots on medication twice a day. So at 19st 11lbs, with a BMI of 40.1, my health wasn’t great and I had nothing to lose by giving it a go.”

Father Paul didn’t find out until the start of filming that the diet he would be trying was Cambridge Weight Plan (CWP).

“I’d heard of the diet, but didn’t know much about it. I was told that it would be a liquid diet of 800 calories per day. It didn’t sound like it was going to be easy.”

As Father Paul had a fatty liver, he was also sent to see Professor Roy Taylor, of Newcastle University.

“An MRI scan showed that my liver was 10.8 per cent fat and I was told it should be around five per cent. But Professor Taylor was confident this could be reduced if I followed the diet. I decided I was going to be the guy that proved Roy Taylor right.

“By the end of the trial, my liver was down to 2.3 per cent fat. I was then told I had a perfectly healthy liver and my pancreas was now producing insulin.”

Father Paul was shown that his daily food consumption was around 4,000 calories a day.

“A typical day would include orange juice and cereal with a few rounds of toast. Lunch would follow with a cup-a-soup, two sandwiches and fruit. Dinner would include meat, potatoes and veg, followed by ice cream, followed by some supper. After being shown a typical day’s food consumption it was easy to see I had a problem of over-eating.”

With daily weigh-ins and weekly appointments with his CWP consultant Darren Donohue, Father Paul lost three stones in nine weeks. Food was then introduced after nine weeks, alongside the products.”

Losing six stone has been a life-changing experience for Paul, who is an Anglican convert and married with two children and five grandchildren.

“I broke both my ankles in 1990 and had a lot of operations following it. I couldn’t walk far before, now I can walk around five miles. I’m walking better, feeling healthier and have lots more energy. I’m planning to get back on a bicycle again, something I haven’t done for many years.”

Father Paul says mass at Christ Church Catholic c-hurch in Cheadle, Stockport, at 10am every morning and his parishioners are amazed at how different he looks. Some have even lost weight with Cambridge Weight Plan themselves, after seeing their priest’s transformation.

“Parishioners haven’t recognised me, they have seen me standing up at the altar and thought I was a new priest. I visited a guy in hospital and he thought I’d sent someone else to visit him.”

Father Paul liked the personal one-to-one element of the diet.

“It’s not like standing on scales in front of everyone. It’s personal to you, the dieter. My consultant, Darren, spurred me on and kept me going throughout. It’s not a crash diet; it’s a choice you make and the diet is controlled.

”I still love food, but it doesn’t have the same place in my life any more.”

Paul has witnessed other health improvements too.

“My sleep apnoea has improved. When first tested, I was having 47 episodes in one hour. Since losing weight and being tested again this has dropped to only 11.

“I keep questioning myself why I didn’t do it sooner. I’ve gone from a 50-inch waist to a 38-inch one. I can’t believe the skinny chinos I pick out of the washing machine are mine.”