



## Facilitated Event Summary

**Vicariate:** Group XII (Cushendall (Layde), Carnlough, Larne, Glenarm (Tickmacreevan),  
Glenariffe, Cushendun

**Vicar Forane:** Fr. Peter Forde

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012

**Venue:** Drumalis, Larne

**Speaker:** Martin Kennedy

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 people from 5 of the above Parishes gathered in the Drumalis, Larne for a Living Church Facilitated Event. There were no people from Glenariffe at the event. There were 56 people in total.

The purpose of the evening can be set out as follows,

- To raise awareness of Living Church
- To begin a process of discernment for our Vicariate
- To pray together and take inspiration from the words of our guest speaker
- To prioritise areas of actions for the Parishes gathered

After introductions the evening began with a period of relaxation and guided prayer using Psalm 126 as our guide. The facilitators encouraged the people gathered there to reflect on the fact that God was, indeed, in the work that they were doing and to ask of themselves, 'why am I here'?

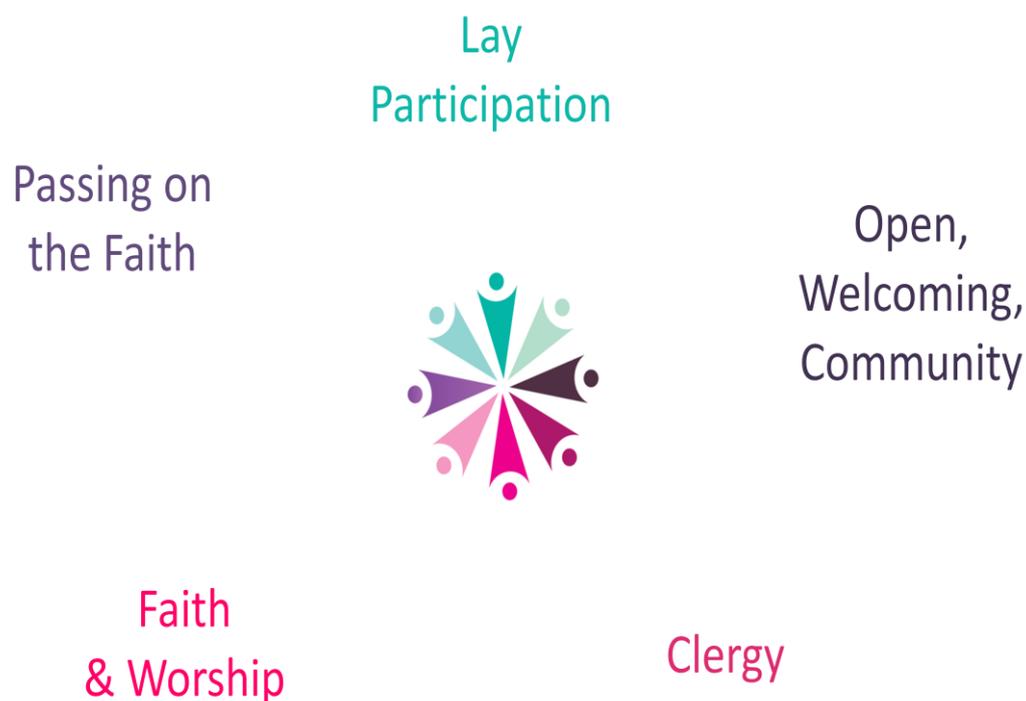
At this stage we invited the people to attempt to summarise their motivation in one word which could be shared with the group. There was great energy in this task and in feedback we heard a range of reason why people had gathered.

We acknowledged each word as it was said and agreed that these words would act as our motivation for moving forward tonight and in the time to come.

Fr. Alan McGuckian and Josephine O'Neill from Living Church then spoke about the Living Church project to date. We spoke of the Listening Events, the Living Church Report and gave a sense to those gathered that **'Living Church seeks to release the energy of the Spirit at work within each and every one of us and listen to what the Spirit is saying to us. In this way, we will not create a Living Church but reveal it'**.

We reminded the people of the five core areas of Living Church as called for by the people in the Listening Events:

## The 5 Themes of Living Church



A this point, we introduced the guest speaker for the evening, Mr. Martin Kennedy, asking the people to allow the words from Martin to sink in and in particular to see how his words resonated with them when they thought of the themes of Living Church.

Martin spoke with great energy and humour. He began by offering us a model for understanding the levels of involvement different people of faith had in the Church. He told us that one group could be called the C's. C's are people who get involved in meetings, in organising and in courses. He suggested that we who had gathered that evening were mainly C's. He then went on to say there

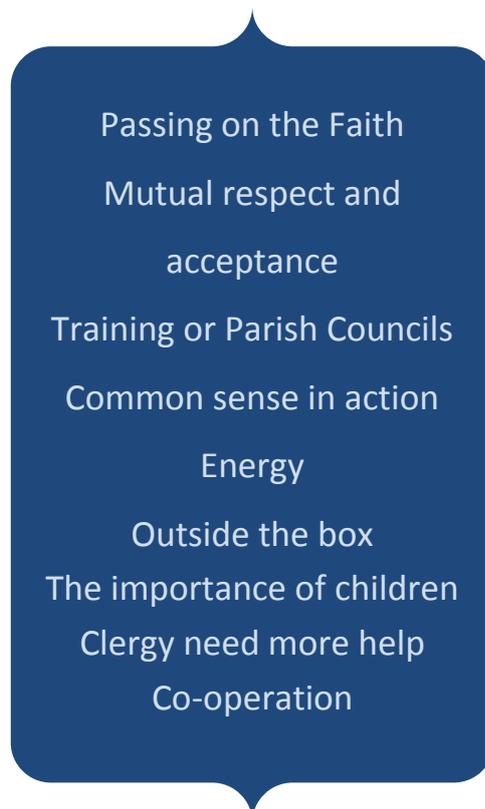
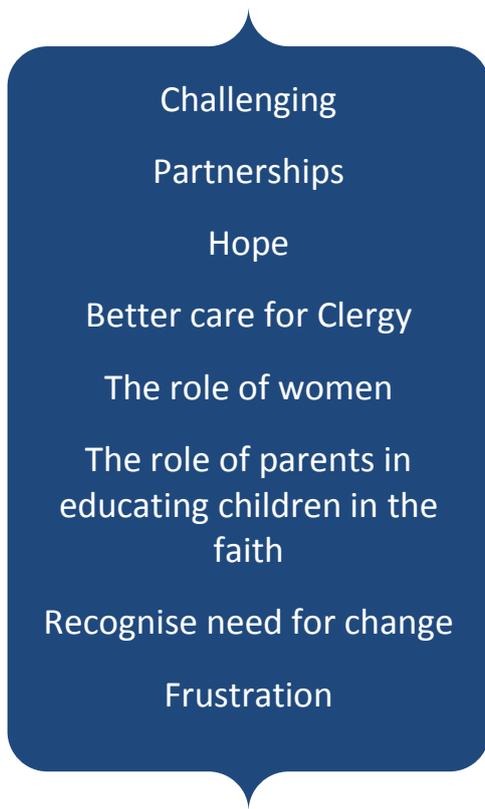
was a second group, he called the B's. These people went to Mass regularly, prayed regularly but would not in general come to meetings or get involved in C type of groups. He completed his model by saying that there was a group called the A's. These people are disconnected from the Parish. They rarely go to Mass, except for Christmas and Easter or weddings and funerals. He reminded us that these were also good people and commented that God hadn't deserted these people nor vice-versa and indeed he felt that God's spirit was working across the A's, B's and C's. His challenge for us gathered was that we needed to think 'out of the box', as C's, if we are to get those A's and B's involved in the Church or just to reach them about the Good News. He reflected his experience of organising alternative ways to engage people rather than inviting them to a meeting. He spoke about making a DVD and holding information mornings in schools for families for example.

His second theme was that of Co-responsibility. He began by saying that the Priest in a Parish could not be expected to run a Parish on his own- it was unfair. He went on to say that the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) was the structure whereby a Priest could be supported and lay people could claim their right to co-responsibility. He described his experiences of being on a PPC and offered a six step method for working in a PPC:

- Gather information about an issue
- Share the information at the PPC
- Clarify the information
- Pray about the issue at hand
- Hear all voices in the PPC- this needs good leadership to ensure all are heard
- Make a decision- is there a pattern or consensus?

He concluded by saying that Parishes needed people of great passion and resource.

We moved on to ask the people to gather in groups of two or three and to ask, 'what struck me about the talk?' They then wrote their answers on paper provided and stuck them in a 'gallery area'. They made for a very colourful, interactive and interesting way to gather feedback. Some of the key themes that struck people are recorded below.



The people seemed to be drawn to reflect on co-responsibility in the church; the exploration of new structures; the need for all to engage in ongoing formation and training and; a love of God.

Following tea and coffee, we re-convened for the second part of the evening where we set the task of seeing how we can create action points for Parishes to manageably move towards achieving some of the above. The people were asked to take part in a two part task:

1. To arrange themselves into Parish and discuss the 5 themes of Living Church. They were then asked to vote for their 'top two' themes in terms of how they felt their Parish needed to develop.
2. To set action points for each of these two areas- providing a contact name for Living Church and some suggestions of how Living Church could help.

**We encouraged the people to hold the ideas they came up with 'lightly'. We acknowledged that, once back in the Parishes, the people may decide to go with these areas and action points or not, according to what they felt was best. As such, it is important to note that the following plans do not (necessarily) represent definitive Parish plans. The important point is to have gained the experience of what the process of Parish planning is like.**

The people took to the task with great energy and the results of the exercise are recorded below:

**Larne:**

<b>Living Church Area</b>	<b>Points for Immediate Action</b>	<b>Request from Living Church</b>
Lay Participation	Pastoral Council	Assistance in setting up Pastoral Council  Can other Parishes offer us assistance?
Open Welcoming Community	Meet and Greet Team	

**Glenarm (Tickmacreevan):**

<b>Living Church Area</b>	<b>Points for Immediate Action</b>	<b>Request from Living Church</b>
Passing on the Faith	Website for discussion of moral issues, monitored only for obscenity and libel. All opinions allowed  Opportunities to learn o more about faith and bible study	Assistance to help establish effectively trained Parish Council
Clergy		

**Cushendun:**

<b>Living Church Area</b>	<b>Points for Immediate Action</b>	<b>Request from Living Church</b>
Lay Participation	Set up Parish Council Set up finance committee	Help to set up councils and committees
Passing on the Faith	Strategy for recovering the missing members	Advice

**Cushendall:**

<b>Living Church Area</b>	<b>Points for Immediate Action</b>	<b>Request from Living Church</b>
Lay Participation	<p>Formation of a Pastoral Council</p> <p>Involvement of Youth</p> <p>Ministry of Welcome</p> <p>Children's Liturgy Support</p> <p>Re-formation of St. Vincent De Paul Society</p>	<p>Speakers</p> <p>Information Packs</p> <p>Training</p>
Passing on the Faith	<p>Promotion of RCIA, Alpha Course</p> <p>More use of former priests</p> <p>Youth Mission</p> <p>Involving Parents and their Children in various ways</p>	

**Carnlough:**

<b>Living Church Area</b>	<b>Points for Immediate Action</b>	<b>Request from Living Church</b>
	<p>Establish a PPC (firstly establish a sub committee)</p> <p>Children's Liturgy</p> <p>Strategy for recovering members</p> <p>Meet and Greet team</p> <p>Web page for moral discussion</p>	<p>Training</p> <p>Speakers</p>

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The above information gives an interesting insight into where the energy lies in terms of individual Parish development. It can be said that the establishment of Parish Pastoral councils was theme that comes out strongly. Also, Passing on the Faith to the young and to those who wish to join the Catholic Church was also important to those gathered there. These themes could form the basis of further discussion at Vicariate meetings.

We welcome the requests from Parishes for support from Living Church and will gather requests from across the Diocese with a view to establishing a training programme to meet the needs expressed. In the mean time Living Church is happy, if asked, to return to the Vicariate to facilitate another meeting where the action points discussed herein can be developed into meaningful action plans for each Parish.

Each Parish gathered there in Drumalis now has a sense of the direction that could be taken in developing their Parish. We would encourage each Parish to work to build on the suggestions of the night. We recommend that this report and the information gathered is shared with each individual Parish and those gathered on the night- perhaps through their contact people. The report summary will be available for all to read on our website. It can be downloaded at <http://www.downandconnor.org/livingchurch/may-vicariate-event>

This was a very lively and prayerful evening which saw a sizeable group of God's people come together to help move this Vicariate forward. In terms of the purpose of the evening we can say that we achieved what we set out to achieve. Our guest speaker, Martin Kennedy, added to the evening with his inspirational talk and the people participated enthusiastically in the group work. The Living Church Team offer sincere thanks to all those involved in organising the event.

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Jim Deeds

Training and Facilitation Officer, Living Church