



Facilitated Event Summary

Vicariate: Group IV (Christ the Redeemer, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Lisburn (Blaris), St Anne's, Derriaghy, St Luke's, Nativity, Aghagallon & Ballinderry, Glenavy & Killead)

Vicar Forane: Fr. Dermot McCaughan

Date: 10th May 2012

Venue: St. Anne's Parish Centre

Speaker: Martin Kennedy

On Thursday 10th May 2012 people from 6 of the Parishes of this Vicariate gathered in St. Anne's Parish Centre. There was no group from Christ the Redeemer, St. Luke's nor Glenavy and Killead. The purpose of the evening was set out and agreed 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 gather in groups of two's and three's to discuss their answers to that question. We further asked 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. Some are recorded below;

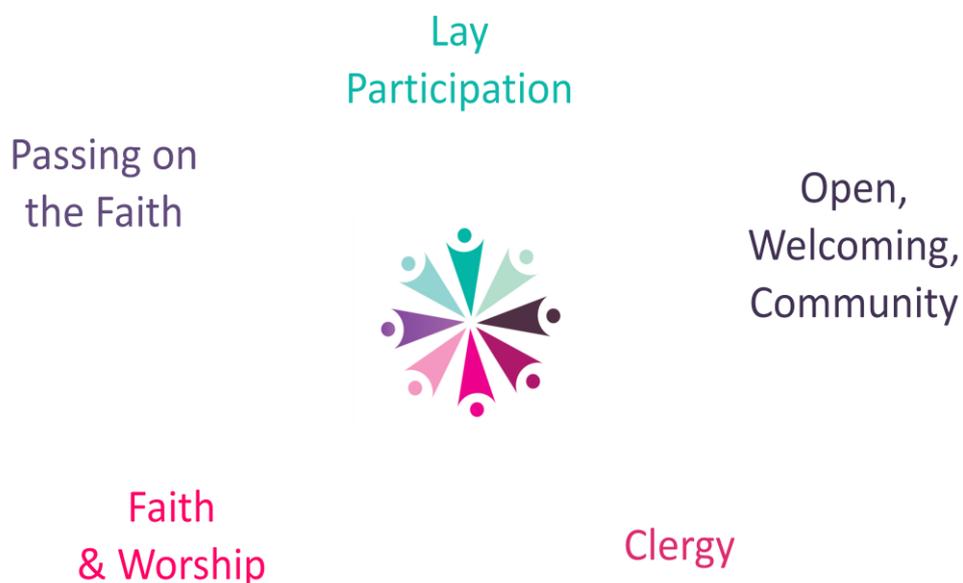
Potential	Inquisitive	Anxiety	Need
Direction	Concern	Future	Hope
Curiosity	Renewal	Asked	Commitment

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.

Paula McKeown and Fr. Alan McGuckian from Living Church then introduced themselves and spoke about the agenda for the evening. Paula spoke about the Living Church project to date. She 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.



Following Martin's talk, we moved on to ask the people to gather in groups of two or three and to ask, 'what struck me about the talk?' Each person on the group had a chance to answer the question and then the group discussed the issues raised. We then asked each member of the group to write their chosen theme on paper provided and to stick them in a 'gallery area'.

They made for a very colourful, interactive and interesting way to gather feedback. Some of the key themes that the people reflected on are recorded below.

Encouraging

Energetic

A different approach

Everyone was included

We were made to feel important

Be more active in the Parish

We need to hear those who are hurting

Need to reach the B's and A's

Ask them that knows!

Need an active PPC

The C's must listen

God is already working in the Church

Some sort of council to bring young people back to the Church

Participation of the lay people with clergy

Listen and pray

Engage with people

God guided

All ideas were to the point of our problems

Having fun

Mission

Need to reach out to the young

Simple ideas

The people seemed to be drawn to reflect on the need for those already engaged in the Church to reach out to those Martin identified as B's and A's; the need for setting up Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC's) and for those to be effective and active, and; the need for reaching out to young people as our future in particular. They seemed to say that new ideas and structures were called for and really fed off the simple, energetic style Martin had for explaining the way forward.

Following a short break, 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 appropriate Parish groups 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.

There were seven groups for this task with Lisburn (Blaris) separating into two manageably-sized groups due to the large number of people from that Parish who attended. The people took to the task with great energy and, we hoped, experienced something of what it is like to begin to make a good plan for moving the Parish forward. The results of the exercise are recorded below:

St. Patrick's, Aghagallon:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
All 5 Areas	Parish Council to look at ways to help Fr. M Must think about youth help	Train Lay People for Bereavement Counselling and Baptisms Training to be of help with suicide awareness group Contacting youth on the street Youth Mission

Derriaghy:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
Open Welcoming Community	<p>Outreach</p> <p>Encouraging greater participation of all the community</p> <p>Exploring and introducing new initiatives</p> <p>Publicising existing groups and organisations within the Parish (Open Day)</p> <p>Youth Involvement</p>	<p>Speakers on a variety of topics</p> <p>Exchange of experiences, ideas and programmes</p>

Our Lady, Queen of Peace:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
<p>Passing on the Faith</p> <p>Faith and Worship</p> <p>Open Welcoming Community</p>	<p>Engage groups previously outside the regular congregation (the A's)</p> <p>Inviting those people into the Parish community through a series of 'lighter' activities</p> <p>Survey the people</p> <p>Welcome pack for new Parish members</p>	

Lisburn (Blaris) 1:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
Lay Participation	<p>Develop a Pastoral Council</p> <p>Identify young people in the life of the Parish</p> <p>More active involvement of parents</p> <p>Complete a list of all organisations involved in the Parish and their achievements on the Parish</p>	<p>Advice on setting up a Parish Pastoral Council</p> <p>Contacts</p> <p>Identify good practice elsewhere</p>

Lisburn (Blaris) 2:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
Passing on the Faith	Form a group to identify needs, ideas, information and roadmap for the future	<p>Expertise</p> <p>Links</p> <p>Resources</p>

Church of the Nativity, Poleglass:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
<p>Passing on the Faith</p> <p>Open Welcoming Community</p>	To set up a Parish Forum to look at Parish Renewal	No need for support just yet. We need to set up our own structures first.

St. Anne's:

Living Church Area	Points for Immediate Action	Request from Living Church
Passing on the Faith	Children's Liturgy-training for teachers Special service after communion including party Youth Faith Development Leaders	Help to train leaders Resources- handouts, child protection etc... Youth Faith Development Leaders- info on recruitment etc...
Faith and Worship	Develop knowledge of Mass- perhaps through homily each week	Website development- central direction

Conclusion and Recommendations

The above information gives an interesting insight into where the energy lies in terms of individual Parish development as well as Vicariate development. It can be said that Passing on the Faith and Open Welcoming Community were the two strongest themes for this Vicariate group and may form a basis for moving ahead together.

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 and support programme to meet the needs expressed. In the mean time Living Church is happy, if asked, to return to the Vicariate/ Parish to facilitate another meeting where the action points discussed herein can be developed into meaningful action plans for each Parish. This can be arranged by any of the contact people contacting the Living Church Office.

Each Parish gathered there in St. Anne's we hope now has an enhanced 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. It could also form the basis for further discussion at Vicariate meetings. 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. It is our hope that the evening was a realistic and hopeful glimpse into the work that lies ahead. 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.

Jim Deeds

Training and Facilitation Officer, Living Church