



## **Facilitated Event Summary**

**Vicariate:** North Belfast Pastoral Area (St. Patrick's, Holy Family, Sacred Heart, St. Vincent de Paul, Holy Cross)

**Vicar Forane:** Fr. Michael Sheehan

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

**Venue:** Sacred Heart Parish Centre

### **Introduction and Purpose:**

On Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012, 15 people gathered for the second in a series of Living Church facilitated events designed to develop structures to help the creation of a Pastoral Area. There were 15 participants from 3 of the Parishes above. There were no people there from Holy Cross or St. Vincent de Paul Parishes. We agreed our purpose as follows:

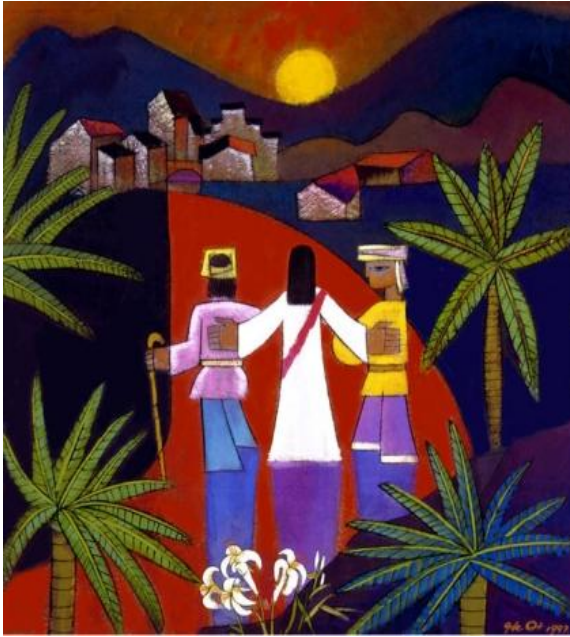
- To gather together as a community in prayer**
- To review the outcomes from our First Session**
- To consider in more depth the work of a Pastoral Area Team (PAT)**

### **A Praying Discerning Community**

**“We come together to model a Praying Discerning Community. We can only seek to reveal the Living Church in our Parish if we recognise first our need to pray and discern the will of God. We must be in communion with each other, resolving difference by reaching consensus.**

**That is why we begin with prayer. Not just because it's 'what Catholics do', but because it invites God into our midst, into our meeting. It says that we are not here for our own agendas, ideas or issues. We are here to hear His will, to act on His behalf.**

We prayed using the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus from the Gospel of Luke.



“Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all the things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"

They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place in these days?"

He asked them, "What things?"

They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.

Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us, while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"



Beginning in this way allowed us to truly arrive at this place and to connect with the sense of despair that the disciples had and that we sometimes have. We also connected with the sense of hope and exhilaration that comes from a personal encounter with Jesus.

## Review of Last Session

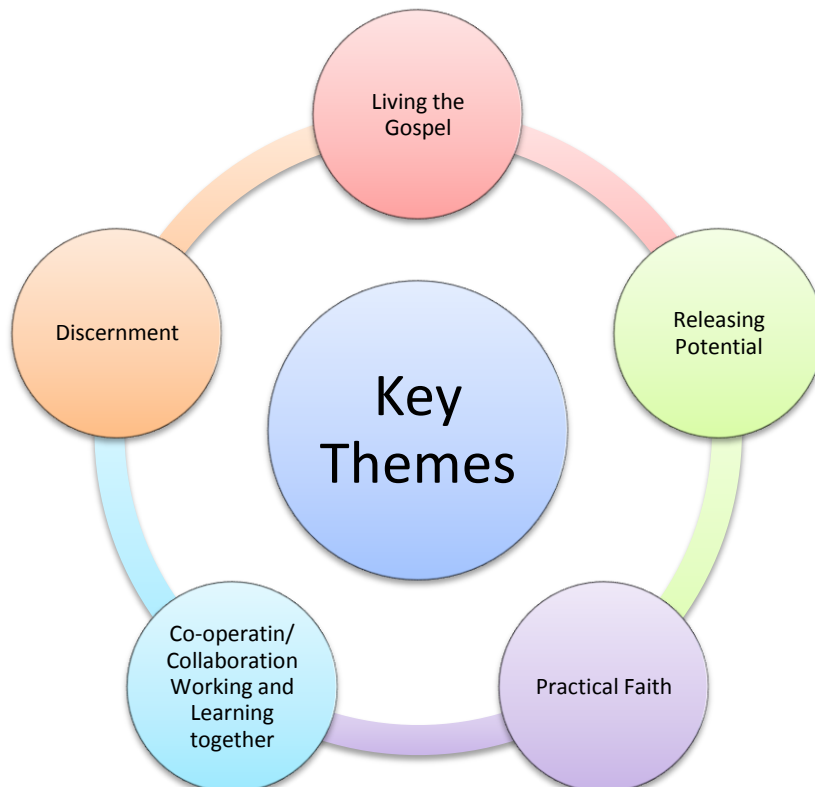
We spent some time reviewing the last session where we set ourselves the task of beginning to consider what a Pastoral Area was and what would make a successful Pastoral Area Team. Below are some of the outcomes from our last session:

## What is a Pastoral Area?

A pastoral area is a group of neighbouring parishes that support each other and share the collaborative gifts and talents of each parish. With the help of the Holy Spirit, they do this in order to fulfill the mission of the Church to proclaim the word of God and further the mission of Christ in the world.



What are the themes that would make a successful Pastoral Area Team?





## Why?

- ***ensure the effective sharing of the many gifts and talents of the people of God in the pastoral area***
- ***identify pastoral matters that can be done better together as a pastoral area than separately as individual parishes.***

### Exercise

Our task for this evening was to break into groups and consider the following:

**In your group consider what areas the Pastoral Area Team would prioritise in their Pastoral Plan for the Pastoral Area.**

We encouraged a period of 'privileged listening' where all members of the group could say what they wanted to see happening across the Pastoral Area. Following this period of listening, the group were asked to feed back 4 ideas. We then grouped the ideas according to the themes they represented:



Developing and  
Sharing the Faith



Developing and  
Sharing  
Resources



Cresting  
Community



Developing  
Communications  
and Relationships

Having completed this exercise, we went on to look at some other ideas of what areas a Pastoral Area Team could focus on. This work came from a book called, Parish Pastoral Councils: A Formation Manual (Snoddy, McNally and Campbell). They suggest the following areas:

- Worship
- Community Building
- Education and Formation
- Social Outreach

The group also looked at the areas of Living Church as possible themes to provide focus for work. In doing this, we agreed that the work we had done together in our groups showed that we were thinking in similar ways to other people tasked with developing these structures. This was heartening to the group. At this point Fr Ciaran Dallat suggested that he could bring the areas described by our group to the Parish Workers group in order to ensure that their work and the work of this group were in harmony. The group agreed and thanked Fr Ciaran.

### **Conclusions**

As the evening drew to a close, we agreed the following:

- We will meet again on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012 in Holy Family Pastoral Centre at 7 p.m.
- All parishioners from the five Parishes are welcome
- There should be a notice in each Parish bulletin about the next meeting stating that it will be about looking at the skills, qualities and experiences necessary for membership of a Pastoral Area Team
- Jim Deeds will create a section on the Living Church website dedicated to the North Belfast Pilot Pastoral Area. Summaries of our sessions will be available there
- The Living Church website should be advertised in each of the Parish bulletins
- Jim and Fr Ciaran will follow up with the clergy of the area re; getting as many people to attend as possible
- We are mindful that two of the parishes are not represented on this group and will try as we go on to resolve this issue

It was noted that the work we are doing is good and is about trying to do as God wants us to do in renewing our Parishes. We now have a clear link with the Parish Workers group with Fr Ciaran bring our agreed themes from tonight to their meeting. We resolved to keep working towards the creation of this Pastoral Area.

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Jim Deeds 4th July 2012