



Facilitated Event Summary

Parish: Our Lady Queen of Peace

Date: 1st September 2012

Venue: Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar

Introduction and Purpose:

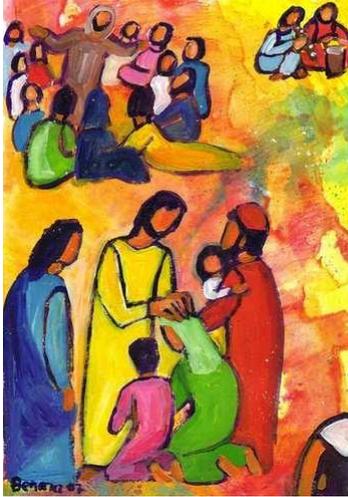
On the 1st September, the members of the Parish Pastoral Council of our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Belfast gathered with their Parish Priest, Fr. Colm McBride for a Living Church facilitated event. The PPC had previously taken part in a number of sessions with Paula McKeown and Fr Alan McGuckian from Living Church which looked at various aspects of the Parish Pastoral Council. Today's event was a full day event and we set and agreed the purpose as follows:

- ✚ To gather as community in prayer
- ✚ To explore the skills, qualities and experiences required for the various roles and responsibilities in a PPC
- ✚ To identify our own group work style
- ✚ To understand better the nature of decision making within our PPC
- ✚ To develop a mission statement for our PPC
- ✚ To select a Chair for our PPC

We reflected that this was to be a busy day and that we were asking a lot of ourselves to achieve all of the above.

Prayer

As set out in the first purpose above, we wanted to gather as a community in prayer. We did this in a number of ways. Firstly, we gathered at the start of the day to listen to Fr Tom Scanlon from Tobar Mhuire as he reflected on Acts 2: 42-47:



“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity - all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their number.”

Tom spoke wonderfully of the beginnings of the early church and how they set for us a blue print for how the Catholic Church developed and indeed for how we should seek to be Church within our PPC’s. He challenged us saying, as the early Church members did, ‘it all starts here’.

Secondly, as the day went on we ended each of our sessions with a prayer and/or a reflection on scripture. Paula chose and led us in these prayers and reflections and they spoke clearly to what we were trying to achieve on the day.

Thirdly, we had our Living Church candle lit beside an open book of scripture right in the middle of the room for the whole day. This reminded us that we were gathered in the presence of God.

Skills Qualities and Experiences

The members of the PPC reflected on the skills, qualities and experiences that they saw in themselves and others. They came up with the following:

Skills:

Leadership Relationship building Educational skills Organiser Communication

Ability to work with people (including young people) Ability to reach out Listener

Qualities:

Empathy Humility Enthusiasm Logical/ Rational Do-er Forward thinker

Prayerful Willing to be part of something new Community Spirit Dedication

Dedication to youth mission Humour Love of children in a faith context

Willing to embrace challenge Caring

Experience:

Well educated Understands Parish Knowledge of Church matters

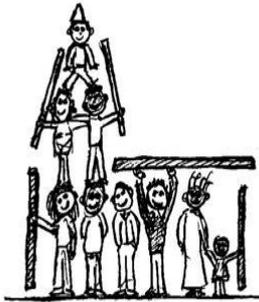
Knowledge of family/child issues Committed Catholic

OUTCOME:

Having looked at the above we agreed that the PPC, in its members, had both breadth and depth of skills and experience. We further reflected that the list of qualities was, by far, the biggest list and that this was encouraging for the members as it said that they were the right people for the PPC simply because of who they were.

These lists may also be helpful for the PPC to reflect on as time goes by (and as members leave and new members join the PPC) to ensure that there is the broadest and widest range of skills and qualities and experiences represented at the PPC.

Group work style



“A team is not a bunch of people with job titles, but a congregation of individuals, each of whom has a role which is understood by other members. Members of a team seek out certain roles and they perform most effectively in the ones that are most natural to them.”

Dr. R. M. Belbin

The members of the PPC then took some time to reflect on the different types of approach we can take in a group. As the quote above tells us, we often find ourselves in roles in groups that suit our approach to group work. The group self assess according to Dr. Belbin’s model as set out below:

TEAM-ROLE CONTRIBUTION

ALLOWABLE WEAKNESSES



PLANT:
Creative, Solves difficult problems

Loses touch with everyday realities



REOSURCE INVESTIGATOR
Enterprising, plans that will carry outside the group

Weak in follow through



CO-ORDINATOR:
Makes good use of group activities, enables

Can over delegate, little to do

TEAM-ROLE CONTRIBUTION

ALLOWABLE WEAKNESSES



SHAPER:
Driving and challenging

Provocative, Aggressive



COMPLETER FINISHER:
Painstaking, Conscientious, polish and edit

Reluctant to delegate, seeks perfection



TEAMWORKER:
Co-operative, Averts friction

Indecisive

TEAM-ROLE CONTRIBUTION

ALLOWABLE WEAKNESSES



MONITOR EVALUATOR:
Discerning and Objective

Slow-moving



IMPLEMENTER:
Disciplined, Efficient, Practical

Slow to let go and change

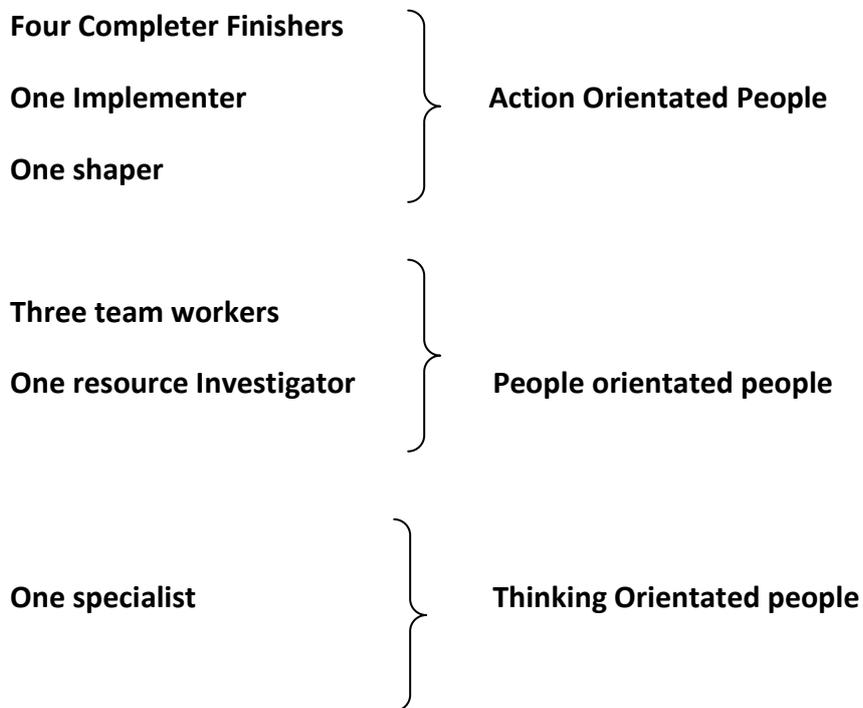


SPECIALIST:
Single-minded, Professionally dedicated

Limited in Interests

We recognised that, while we may see ourselves in a number of these categories, we can usually find one where we are predominantly strong.

In their self assessment the members of the PPC selected as follows:



OUTCOME:

Our reflection here brought up that, as a group of people, all three areas are covered. However, the area of thinking was not covered as well as the other two areas. This coupled with the fact that most people self selected as action orientated people means that the PPC members could keep an eye to whether or not they have thought, prayed and discerned enough about a particular issue before action is taken.

Further work on personality typing may be helpful as a way for the members to get to know each other.

Charter for Healthy Relationships

The group drew up the following charter for healthy relationships which can be used to create the proper culture for the PPC. It can also be applied to all of our relationships in life and in particular to those relationships within the Parish.

Live from Christian Values

Value others

Be thankful

Affirm one another

Listen to one another

Value all methods of Communication

Remember the value of face to face Communication

See things from the other's perspective

When there are problems keep dialogue going and seek mediation

Foster a sense of Parish identity- belonging to the Parish family- where everyone can and does share responsibility and action

Co-Responsibility on a Consultative PPC

How do we practically understand Co-responsibility in action between Priest and People in our Parish Pastoral Council? This question arises when we consider that in Canon Law, the Pastoral Parish Council is seen as a 'consultative' body with the Parish Priest as the presiding officer to whom recommendations are made but who can freely choose which advice to accept.

The group came up with the following points to help guide Co-responsible working on the PPC:

- ✚ **Be positive**
- ✚ **Share responsibility**
- ✚ **Respect and togetherness**
- ✚ **Reach Consensus in the group (Priest and Lay people together)**
- ✚ **Move forward in prayer and discernment**
- ✚ **Be hopeful, active and responsive**
- ✚ **Ensure that good advice includes all information and discuss the issues**
- ✚ **Avoid harsh language**
- ✚ **Where there is a problem, seek mediation**

In our discussion and feedback during this exercise we heard a quote from Mark Fischer who writes on Pastoral Councils:

“All Christians are to build community, pray, collaborate with the pastor, lead by example and be spiritual. They do so, not in an impersonal process but in a relationship. It is a relationship with a pastor who knows their readiness...with fellow parishioners whose wisdom they seek, and ultimately with God whom they glimpse in dialogue.”

OUTCOME:

In this way, we said, though it was possible that on rare occasions the Parish Priest may choose not to follow the advice of the Council, this was unlikely as the Father Colm would be in relationship with the other members of the Council; he would have participated in the prayer and discernment; and he would have been part of the decision making process. The group agreed also that “Consensus” would be their preferred decision making process, recognising that this is sometimes difficult and that there may be times when other models of decision making are more appropriate (for example on matters theological, it will be more appropriate for Fr Colm to make decisions after discussion with PPC members).

Mission Statement and Selection of Chair

Through hard work and the outworking of a consensus driven process, the PPC and Fr Colm have come up with the following Mission Statement:

“Inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by God’s love, the Parish Pastoral Council of the Parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace aims to enable parishioners to move closer to God and to promote an inclusive, vibrant Parish.”

Selection of Chair:

We spent some time looking at the various roles and responsibilities within the PPC: Parish Priest, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Prayer Leader as well as the roles of all members. Arising out of this discussion, we asked the group to consider if they felt called to nominate themselves or another for the role of Chair. Nominations were collected. The resulting discussions saw **Danny O’Connor** elected as Chairperson.

The group unanimously supported Danny in his election and passed on their warm regards to him, wishing him every success in his role. Well done Danny!

Conclusion

As I commented in the introduction to this report, we set ourselves a difficult task in setting out to complete as much as we did. However, through hard work and commitment the group achieved the purpose of the day. The process involved was, I feel, as important as the outcomes. It gave the people involved a chance to be together as people of God, praying and discussing together. There was an opportunity to get to know each other and to find out how everyone worked in the group. It felt affirming to be part of a group who could recognise in themselves and each other a great breadth and depth of skills and qualities and experiences. There was also an opportunity to practice resolving issues- such as working on the Mission Statement- whereby the group put into practice the elements of their Charter for Healthy Relationships and their consensus model of decision making.

It was encouraging to see Fr Colm work with the members of the PPC in such a constructive and positive manner and to see the lay members of the PPC be respectful to the role of the Parish Priest.

Living Church thanks all those involved for the invitation to facilitate this group of people and wish Fr Colm and the PPC of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish every blessing as they move forward to further build the Kingdom in their Parish.

Jim Deeds

Living Church

September 4th 2012