



Facilitated Event Summary

Parish: Loughshore

Date: 8th October 2012

Venue: Greencastle Parish Hall

Introduction and Purpose:

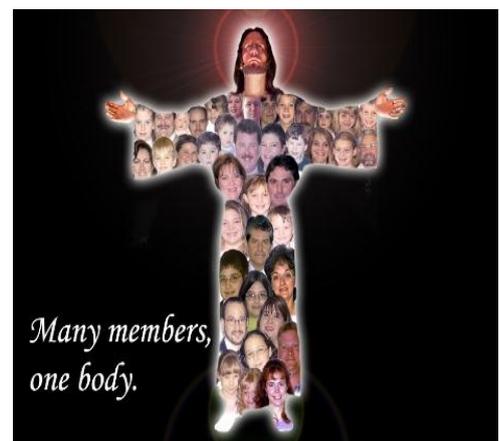
On Monday 8th October, 44 people from the Parish gathered in Greencastle for the second in a series of group meetings designed to establish- in time- a Parish Pastoral Council in the Parish. It was great to see so many of the group were people who had been to the first meeting and had returned. It was also great to see some people who were coming for the first time. We thanked and welcomed all who gathered.

A Praying Discerning Community

We began the evening with a period of prayer as a way of 'arriving' at the session and looking to God for direction for our session this evening. We prayed with 1 Corinthians 12 hearing the call to be one body one spirit in Christ.

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.



Introduction and Purpose

Before agreeing our purpose for the evening we agreed a set of guiding principles for this series of meetings:

- ✚ We are not the Parish Pastoral Council
- ✚ We are in the business of giving and receiving wisdom from all
- ✚ We collect any questions as we go
- ✚ Our work informs the way forward
- ✚ We meet in the Spirit of Christ-what does God want? Not 'did I get what I want or did you get what you want- more can I live with the outcome and is it what is best for our Parish.
- ✚ We seek consensus- not voting

The purpose of the evening was then agreed as:

- ✚ To gather together as a community in prayer
- ✚ To review our last session
- ✚ To consider what a Parish is
- ✚ To consider the nature of our Parish

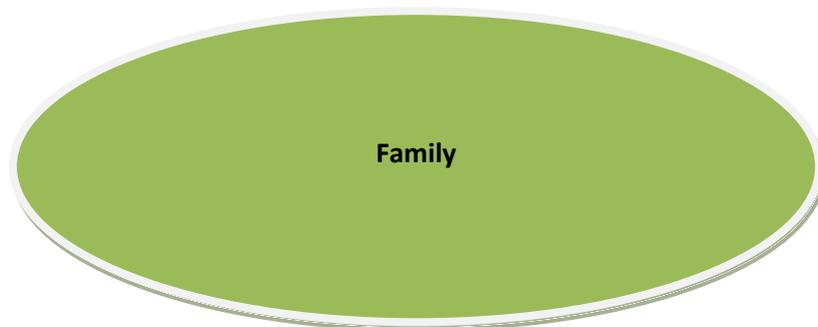
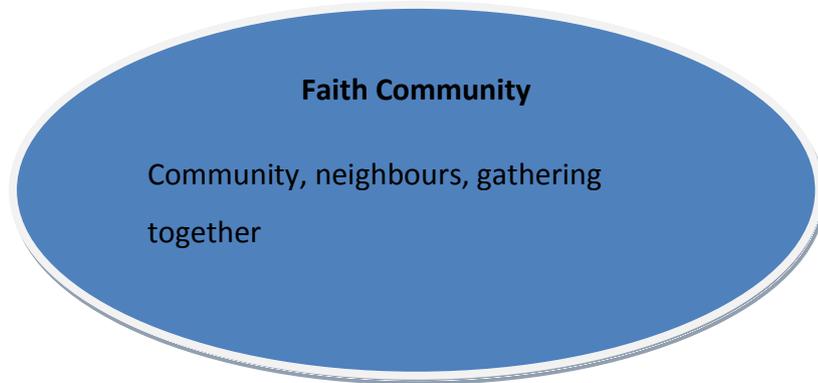
Before moving to consider the task for the evening we spent some time reviewing the work from the last session. This allowed those of us who attended the last session to be reminded of what we had done and those who had not attended were given a chance to reflect on the work so far.

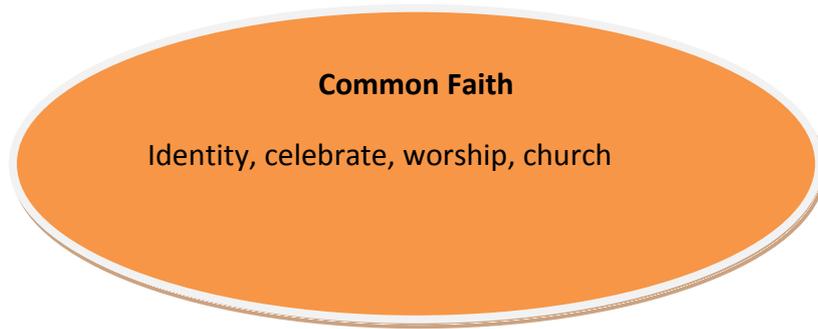
Exercise- What is a Parish?

In small groups we asked the people to complete the following task:

When you hear the word 'Parish' what do you think of?

Each group had a ten minute discussion about their views on what a Parish is before considering their answers. Each group was given cards and recorded their answers. We collected the cards and reviewed them as follows:





The work above allows us to bring together a working definition of what a Parish is:

A faith community gathered in a particular area called to create a sense of belonging and family with a shared identity and shared faith. They proclaim this faith in their coming together to worship and in their sharing love with others in service.

At this stage, the people took some time to reflect on the definition they had created and to ask themselves if it challenged them to do anything differently, less or more personally in how they approached Parish life. We spent some time on this and, while there were some recorded commitments from most of the people in the room, they were personal and are not recorded here publicly.

There was a feeling in the room that this definition was one that could unite people and one that gave people a sense of energy. We felt that this definition could be shared with the wider Parish in the bulletin.

Conclusion

It is only in the context of truly understanding Parish that we can go forward to look at our own Parish and where it needs to develop. In terms of the Loughshore, there are varying ways that people speak of it- as one Parish, as three Parishes or even as four Parishes. There was a growing sense of the need for unity under one Parish identity. However, this is something that we will deal with more in our next session. After a final prayer we set the following action points:

-  Jim will write up a full report of the session

-  The definition of Parish should be put into the bulletin for all to see

-  All Parishioners are welcome to join us in any of the sessions

-  The next session will be on Tuesday 13th November 2012 at 7 p.m. in St. James' Parish Hall

This was a lively, energetic and prayer filled meeting. All who attended are thanked for doing so and for their commitment to the process.