



## Facilitated Event Summary

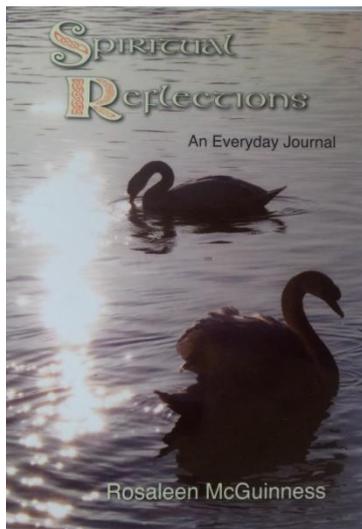
**Parish:** St. Teresa of Avila

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> August 2012

**Venue:** Parish Centre

### Introduction and Purpose:

On Sunday evening 26<sup>th</sup> August 2012, 16 people from the Parish of St. Teresa's gathered together in the Parish Centre for the 5<sup>th</sup> in a series of meetings designed to culminate in the forming of a Parish Pastoral Council.



As always at our meetings we began in prayer. We sat in our Sacred space in the room. We had a lit candle and a book of Scriptures as our focal point. The lights were dimmed and the atmosphere was at once relaxing and prayerful. This evening we used a reflection from a newly launched book of spiritual reflections by Rosaleen McGuinness. Fr Brendan led us in our reflection that reminded us that we need to keep focussed on our mission to show love for God and others and that we need to pray that we are given the capacity to do so. We remembered those for whom spare capacity at this time was not possible and those who felt tired in their Christian mission to spread the Good News.

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?

- ✚ We seek consensus- not voting
- ✚ 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.

The purpose of the evening was then agreed as:

- ✚ To gather together as a community in prayer
- ✚ To review our last session
- ✚ To consider in more depth roles of the people on a Pastoral Council
- ✚ To consider the skills, qualities and experience of the PPC members

### **Review of the Previous Meetings:**

We spent some time at the beginning of the evening reminding the people who came of the work done in previous sessions. This was particularly important for those who had missed one or two meetings and, more especially, those who were attending tonight for the first time. For details of previous meetings, please visit;

<http://www.downandconnor.org/livingchurch/pastoral-area-teams/>.

### **Roles within the group:**

We looked at the roles of the Council members. We agreed that there would be common roles for all:

- Attend on a regular basis
- Participate in the deliberations of the council
- Assist where possible with the implementation of Parish policies
- Grow in knowledge and awareness of what is happening in the Parish
- Take part in training for all new members and ongoing formation

We also agreed that there are specific roles or offices within the Council:

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## The Parish Priest

The Parish Priest has been entrusted with the care of the Parish by the Bishop

The pastor (who presides at all council meetings) gathers the executive or agenda committee



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## The Executive Committee

Most guidelines for councils recommend the establishment of an “**executive**” or “**agenda**” committee. It designs the council’s meetings.



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## The Chair

The chairperson’s task is to follow the agenda, to start and end on time, and to give everyone a chance to speak and be heard

S/he facilitates the meeting

Elected by members of the Council for a specific period of time

May have a vice-chair who deputises for Chair if absent and can share the workload

## The Secretary

The secretary keeps a record of meetings , a record that reflects whether or not the meetings achieved the agenda

Circulates relevant material to the members

May be a member council or appointed to the role



Fr Brendan shared that he felt that the election of the people to these roles would not be an immediate point of action for the Council. Rather he felt that the Council would, firstly, be established, and through getting to know each other the people who best fit these roles would become evident.

### **Exercise- Skills, Qualities, Experience**

At this point, we considered what skills, qualities and experiences we would like our Council members to have or to develop through being a member of the Council. We acknowledged that we did not all have every one of the skills necessary but that as a group the members of the Council may have the skills and would certainly have an opportunity to develop the skills as part of ongoing training for the Council members.

In order to consider the above, we split into four groups with the following task:

**In your group consider what skills, qualities and experience a member of the Parish Pastoral Council would have**

Each of the four groups came up with ideas which they recorded on cards. Once we collected the ideas we set about separating them into skills, qualities and experience. The results can be seen below:

### *Skills*

Organisational Skills  
Imagination People Skills  
Interpersonal Skills  
Social Skills  
Articulate  
Listener  
Clarity of thought and speech  
Ability to judge

### *Experience*

Baptised  
Practicing Parishioner  
Insight into Parish

### *Qualities*

Commitment  
Dedication  
Wisdom  
Understanding  
Sensitive  
Team Player  
Open minded  
Approachable  
Calm  
Empathetic  
Fair  
Prayerful

In discussion we noted that we recorded less in terms of necessary experience than the others. In this way, we hoped that the Council would be open to the widest amount of people in our Parish to express an interest in.

We recorded most in the qualities section. In this way, it seems that the group felt that it was more important **who** you were than what you had done and the skills you had.

### **Exercise- Our skills and qualities**

At this point we had a discussion about how, culturally, we found it difficult to acknowledge our own skills and talents. Therefore, as a finishing exercise we each took a space in the room with a blank card and a marker and we were invited to write on the card a skill or quality that we recognised in ourselves.

Once the cards were written on they were put in a container and mixed about. Jim and Fr Brendan then took turns reading out the words written on the cards. In this way, no-one could recognise any one else's words or writing.

In reading out the cards, the group acknowledged that there were considerable skills in this group of 16 people. We could leave confident, therefore, that the skills and qualities we need for our Council were surely out there in the Parish community.

**Conclusion:**

We concluded the evening by, once again, gathering in prayer. We watched a short animated film that reminded us that we were One Body in Christ and that we were called to bring light to those in darkness.

This session brought a wonderful sense of the skills that we need really being out there in the Parish community. It was an affirming session for all those who gathered tonight.

We agreed to meet again on **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 7 pm in the Parish** Centre to look at a session called: "Our Parish. Three Churches but One Body One Spirit in Christ. "

Jim Deeds

Living Church

August 2012