



Down And Connor Diocesan Review 2014

Vicariate VIII: St. Patrick's, Holy Family, Sacred Heart, St. Vincent de Paul, Holy Cross

Date: 2nd June 2014

Venue: St Patrick's Old School, Donegall Street

The people who gathered and heard some of the findings of our review identified themes for our Diocese as we move into the future. Many of these themes were mentioned numerous times and using slightly different forms of words by the people.

Further to this, the people who gathered also considered what they felt the implications might be of the review. In particular, they considered our situation in light of Pope Francis' words on Church in the following context:

- Church is Missionary
- We need to proclaim the Good News in the world today
- We need to be called to conversion and renewal- both individually and as a body

Below are the collated comments of the people that night.

Formation and renewal of lay people in ministry	Review the number of Masses we have in the Vicariate	Fix your own area first	Lay management of Parish resources	Reach out to those not attending	Priests' workload too high	Prayers for vocations
Consider role of women seriously	Clarify the role of Priests	Do we need all church buildings	Prioritise what we do	Co-responsibility – what is it?	Priests will have to let go	Communication is key
Engage beyond the Sacraments	Deacons	Funding for lay administrators	Religious education	Worship, welfare, welcome	Mission	Lay and liturgy
Reflection on discipleship	How do we get involved?	Keep children involved	Priest allowed to prioritise his time	Appoint co-ordinators	Vocations	We need to be more missionary

We recognised that we were not making decision that night. Rather we were engaging in a conversation about what the possible implications were for our Diocese at this time. This was one of twelve vicariate meetings taking place over this next month or so. We made the following commitments:

- Living Church Team will travel and listen across the Diocese in these coming weeks
- Collate all the things said across the Diocese
- Inform the Bishop
- Invite other parts of the body of our Diocese to the same conversation - Bishops, Clergy, Council of Priests, Diocesan Pastoral Council for example
- We will all enter into a period of intentional discernment -
 - Pray
 - Meet
 - Discuss
- Come back around the end of the year to hear the fruits of that discernment and to discuss practically how we go about taking our next steps on our journey

In order to help us all in this period of intentional discernment, we would invite and encourage all to read Pope Francis' letter- **Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)** as well as Bishop Noel's Easter letter- **The lights of Heaven**. The texts will help us focus our prayers, thoughts and conversations as we travel together on the journey of faith in Down and Connor at this time.

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way”. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory. I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines found in this document generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment.”

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium n33

