



IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

*Commission for Pastoral Renewal
and Adult Faith development*

ANNUAL REPORT

May 2009

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The annual convention took place on 29 May 2008. It was chaired by Bishop Jim Moriarty, chair of the Bishops' Commission. While 20 dioceses were represented, the number of delegates (30) present was smaller than in previous years.



The regional representatives gave summary reports of progress.

Regional representation

As the first set of regional representatives had completed their term of 3 years, new representatives were to be nominated at this convention or soon afterwards. This fact occasioned a review of the role of regional representatives in general, as well as the operation of the Advisory Board.

Summary of the review:

- o There is a desire for greater ownership of the work at local (regional) level. While efforts at subsidiarity are appreciated better models are needed involving greater activity at provincial level. The challenges of this were also recognised.
- o Regional meetings need to be organised regionally.
- o The advisory nature of the board needs to be developed, based on the real issues which arise in practice.
- o Problems rather than symptoms need to be discerned.
- o It was recommended that sub-groups be formed from a base which is wider than the membership of the advisory board. The task-group model may have greater possibilities in this regard.
- o The dual mandate of the Commission i.e. pastoral renewal and adult faith development was questioned.
- o Local communication in provincial and diocesan groups needs to be developed. The

idea of a resource person in each region was raised.

- o The connection with the Bishops' Conference needs to be more fruitful.

Nominations and appointment of new regional representatives

All those nominated were subsequently appointed to the Advisory Board by the Bishops in conference. The full list of members is given in Appendix II, p. 13.



Overall review of the convention

- o Such events are necessary for making connections and having conversation, formal and informal, with like-minded people.
- o If energy is low, this should challenge rather than discourage.
- o There is need for more connection with the issues arising in the dioceses.
- o The methods used at national level need to mirror the best of what happens locally.

MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION AND ADVISORY BOARD

Two of the three annual meetings have taken place at time of writing. The third will take place on 20 May.

The meetings are attended by Advisory Board members and are chaired in turn by Episcopal members of the Commission.

There was a consistent effort this year to advance the aims of the Advisory Board in line with the vision articulated at the convention.

Summary accounts of the year's meetings to date and a working statement of the tasks of the regional representatives is given in Appendix III, p.14.

SPRING REGIONAL MEETINGS

The regional meetings took place in four venues in late January and early February. In all, 23 dioceses were represented.

Adult Faith Development project

One of the main items in the meetings was feedback and consultation by Domhnall O'Neill re the intranet project for adult faith development (report p. 5 and appendix IV p.17). This discussion generated much interest and also raised important questions regarding access, level of usage, and ongoing maintenance of the web-space.

Developing Pastoral Areas

The second item which received a lot of attention was that of developing pastoral areas. At the meeting of the Department of Worship, Pastoral Renewal and Faith Development in November, there was a request that this topic be explored by the Commission, with a view to drawing together the best wisdom which is arising from experience, practice and reflection. The topic will be a primary focus of discussion at the forthcoming convention on 21 May.

Key points emerging from the discussions at the regional meetings were:

- do not try to cover too much;
- invest some time in theological underpinning and the values that need to guide the formation and the life of pastoral areas;
- try to get beyond seeing pastoral areas as pragmatic response to reducing numbers of clergy;
- tap good experience, and point to helpful resources; name key issues and also possibilities.;
- burning questions include the role of priest and the role of lay people, and how to work transparently.

It was noted that initiatives in pastoral development have sometimes created expectations but afterwards led to disillusionment. The value of facilitation was also emphasised.

Other issues arising from regional conversations the promotion of RCIA and the need for clarity about who is moving this forward; the need for common understanding of language used in discussing pastoral development (though it was also noted that this may need to remain fluid in a time of much exploration and experimentation 'balance the desire for solidarity with the need for diversity); and questions relating to employment.

The **National Directory for Catechesis** is eagerly awaited, as a catalyst for action in light of a national vision of faith development.

Review of the regional meetings by participants

- The opportunity to meet together was welcomed, as well as the invitation to connect with the work of the Commission.
- The meetings were most successful where there was sufficient time for conversation among participants as regional groups as well as contributing to the ongoing work at national level. This pattern will be developed by the regional representatives.
- New-comers to the meetings need orientation.
- There is need for more information on current practice, for research and reflection.
- For sustainable pastoral development it will be necessary to develop solidarity, to finding spaces for positive energy and so generate and image which makes an impact on general public;
- There is need for more national *fora* communicating cutting edge pastoral initiatives.

Some further comments:

'It is encouraging to hear of developments outside of one's own dioceses. I look forward to following them in the days ahead.'

'It is exciting to see the different approaches, and recognise that there are many possible lines of action.'

'The meeting was stimulating.'

'There are assumptions underpinning the meetings that may not always be justified, i.e. that each diocese is moving ahead with direction.'

PARISH-ORIENTED ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT

As a follow-up to his work for the Commission last year, Mr. Domhnall O'Neill was contracted for a further seven-month period again this year. The aim of this phase of Domhnall's work is to develop an intranet system primarily for diocesan directors of parish-oriented adult faith development.

To guide him in his task, Domhnall conducted a survey of the needs of diocesan personnel and presented his findings at the spring regional

meetings. (These are given in Appendix IV p. 17) At the spring regional meetings, Domhnall had further constructive discussion on the proposed system, which promises a convenient means of ongoing communication, sharing of resources and reflection between dioceses.

Domhnall is due to present an update, and hopefully a 'first edition' of the intranet at the Convention on 21 May.

YOUTH: CALLED TOGETHER, MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

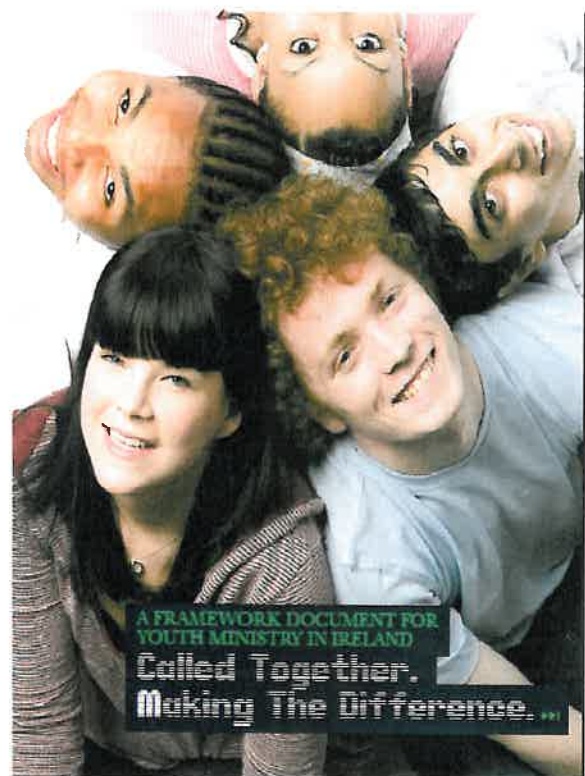
At the convention 2007 a consultation process was launched aimed at developing a framework document for youth ministry in Ireland today.

This project was undertaken jointly by the Commission, through its subgroup on youth, and the National Committee of Diocesan Youth Directors (NCDYD), both under the chairmanship of Bishop Donal McKeown. It was facilitated by Fr. Michael Kelleher CSsR, Director of the Youth Ministry Studies Programme.

After many conversations and consultation drafts, and much dedication to the task, we now have '*Called Together, Making the Difference*' published by Veritas on behalf of the sponsoring groups of the Bishops' Conference. The document is addressed to young people ('13-30') and to all who care about them and work with them.

Huge thanks are due to all who have participated in this project, and especially to Michael for the commitment which he brought to it. The document is presented in a colourful and lively format through the services of Redemptorist Publications.

'*Called Together, Making the Difference*' will be launched in Maynooth on 30 May, the eve of Pentecost, in a celebration involving young people and orchestrated by members of NCDYD.



An implementation group will be established by the Bishops Conference, on which all sectors involved in youth ministry will be represented.

Pope Benedict XVI speaks of his joy at addressing the World Youth Day gathering in Sydney 2008. "Standing before me I see a vibrant image of the universal church," he said. "The variety of nations and cultures from which you hail shows that indeed Christ's good news is for everyone, it has reached the ends of the earth."

'Now is the time for communication, dialogue, networking, and collaboration.'

Conference participant

The 130 participants at the pastoral conference had much in common – welcome for one another, enthusiasm for their faith, and commitment to their mission. The diversity in the gathering generated an energy which was remarkable, not least through the carefully designed process of dialogue to which all were invited. They engaged diligently throughout the two-day event with a 'World Café' process (see www.theworldcafe.com *shaping our future through conversations that matter*). The unity in the gathering found vibrant expression in the celebration of Eucharist on the evening of the first day.



Who came?

Of those present, 29% were lay women, 19% lay men, 26% ordained and 26% religious women. The following figures are also interesting: 35% of participants described their ministries as parish-based and 20% as diocesan. A further 20% belong to a variety of lay associations and movements, and the remaining 25% included people involved in chaplaincy, school-based faith development, publications, pastoral agencies, training, community/spirituality and religious congregational leadership.

What happened?

The conference was opened by Bishop Seamus Freeman on behalf of the Commission for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development. Bishop Freeman encouraged all present to enter into the event mindful of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: 'there are many different gifts but always the same Spirit, there are many different ways of serving but it is always the same Lord'.

Dr. Oonagh O'Brien, now based in Cambridge but no stranger to the pastoral scene in Ireland, presented an opening paper entitled 'Reflecting on our Practices as People of Faith'. This was quite a provocative piece, in which Oonagh drew on an

impressive array of sources. In summary, she alerted us to the temptation to idolise our own interpretations, even of Church, tradition and where it is that Jesus is to be found. A great introduction to an extended time of dialogue! A recording of Oonagh's paper is available from Éist eist@eircom.net and the text appeared in the November issue of *The Furrow*.

Dr. Tom Sweetser SJ and Sr. Peg Bishop OSF from Milwaukee (www.pepparish.org) then directed a 'World Café' process. By talking together, first, about what we agree on, it was quickly evident that the 'same Spirit' was alive and active among us. By recognising our several and diverse gifts and vocations, we experienced how they serve the 'same Lord'. Later, Tom and Peg introduced the theme of covenant as a basis of all our relationships in church, and asked what is it that works against covenant at the present time in Ireland. Points from this conversation were documented and participants received copies for discussion in their home contexts – potentially a very useful exercise.

During the afternoon of the second day, participants agreed to take time for a meditative walk, to distil what they were taking home and what they wanted to say to the Commission before they left. Feedback was presented in written form as part of



the closing session. Bishop Donal McKeown, on behalf of the Commission gave a closing address, in which he recognised the sincerity and commitment of the gathering and assured those present that the outcomes of the conference will be considered carefully by the Commission.

Summary of remarks and recommendations

- o The feedback contained many expressions of joy and appreciation. The opportunity to express views and hear others was 'useful, refreshing, life-giving'. It was 'enjoyable and

- uplifting'. It was observed that 'participation creates energy for ministry'.
- o There were pleas for events and forums 'like this' at parish and diocesan levels, for inclusive models of Church, including the voice and the gifts of women, for 'mature' partnerships in pastoral ministries.
 - o There were many expressions of what is needed for mission now: structured programmes to help families hand on faith; creative input to planning liturgy, to developing RCIA, to formation of seminarians, of ordained and of lay people for collaboration in ministry; resources for developing parish pastoral councils; 'create a vision of parish and expectations of PPCs'.
 - o 'It is important that we do not fossilize or idolize the parish structure we have inherited in such a way that we stifle the vibrancy of faithful and evangelical efforts among those [who may seem] far from the Church.'
- o 'We should replicate for the International Eucharistic Congress 2012 what was done in preparation for the Special Olympics in this country in every town in Ireland and their communities.'
 - o To the Bishops' Commission: 'do not be afraid'; 'model the church you are hope for'; develop a structure, such as a commission, of lay associations to keep alive the kind of dialogue and collaboration which has happened during these two days.

As conference coordinator, Sr. Anne expressed thanks to Mr. John Colgan for his expert facilitation, members of the Advisory Board for great collaboration in the process, Bernie Martin for administration and Dr. Anne O'Gara, President, Ciarán Fogarty, manager and the staff at the Marino Conference Centre for their welcome and attentiveness.

**FOLLOW-UP TO PASTORAL CONFERENCE:
GATHERING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS
AND ASSOCIATIONS OF LAY FAITHFUL**

A one-day event was organised on 4 March for representatives of ecclesial movements and associations of the lay faithful to come together with representatives of the Commission and Advisory Board. Bishop Francis Lagan, chair of the subgroup on laity, chaired the gathering and the facilitator was Mr. John Colgan (below). Eighteen groups responded.



The aims of the day were to further explore the 'common ground' of Christian life and mission shared by everyone in the

Church, and to become aware of how the gifts and charisms of particular associations of the faithful enrich not only members' own lives but also the whole Church. The need for dialogue and collaboration remained pivotal to proceedings.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Tony Hanna (right) who is an internationally recognised authority on the subject of ecclesial movements.



Summary of hopes and concerns of the participants

- o Communication is key; nobody has all the truth.
- o It is great to meet with people who have different charisms, -to get to know each other's charisms, to see and accept variety.
- o Groups in mission need to notice clashes of purpose and reach a harmony of interests.
- o There is need for common vision, leadership and a certain amount of coordination at all levels.
- o Evangelisation is a crying need. How are we to proclaim Christ? We can use today to find new ways to evangelise, to tap into one another's wisdom and be empowered and enriched.
- o We must tap experience to help us connect with culture e.g. of young people.
- o We have the hope and aspiration that this forum would be consistently encouraging; that we would get to know people here present, communicate with one another and be enriched.
- o We would hope to have periodic meeting like this regionally, and to replicate what is happening here in parishes; to be aware of little fires burning brightly against dying embers.
- o We hope that the Bishops' Commission and this body can empower other laity, sharing

formation opportunities, including our own formation.

- o We also empower clergy, asking them to welcome charisms among laity and encouraging them to invite us to contribute to evangelisation.
- o How to revitalise the Church, getting to know the richness and variety of associations here and in the dioceses and the country. How to pool resources and work together
- o How to waken up the 'sleeping giant' of all the baptised.
- o How to evangelise in situations such as young people coming as couples with children for communion.

Summary of reflections from the plenary session

Many aspects of Tony's talk were affirming and also offered new perspectives. These were greatly valued. They included the interplay of structure and life, of institution and Charism, of the petrine and marian dimensions of Church. In this context the growth in movements was acknowledged. The Spirit of God is alive and well, and while the supervision of the magisterium is necessary and welcome, vibrancy in church should not be stifled. Structures need to reflect co-essentiality of charismatic and institutional.



Church documents and, notably, Pope John Paul II call us to spirituality of communion and to put all resources into evangelisation. This encourages us to find new ways of being Church, and reaffirms our dignity as lay people, as partners in mission. Vocations to priesthood, too, are coming from movements.

Tension between parishes and movements should be 'more good than bad'. We are parishioners first, members of ecclesial movements and lay associations second. This initiative here today and in Marino, with bishops present, are concrete efforts to bridge gaps.

It is a challenge for all to use resources, including resources provided by speaker and coordinator of



this conference. This conference should affirm variety of other conferences

In our pluralist society people need to be met where they are at. - Church present in human form will acknowledge human brokenness.

Challenges in Ireland include the challenge of the new age movement. We need to inform ourselves re what it is, its outworking and how we can critique it. We must look at best practice in parishes and celebrate and learn from that.

We need a new Catholic identity, flowing from renewed catechesis. We are challenged to live baptism, through which each one takes responsibility for evangelisation.

We must have dialogue. We must not judge, because we could all be wrong! We must be open, and give support to one another.

See also Ecclesial Movements: global perspective, Appendix V p.28.

Review

This day's proceedings were very much appreciated by the participants. Comments related to content, process, hospitality, energy, and the diversity in the groups.

Ways forward included replication of this kind of event at more local levels. Just one change from the present format was suggested for the future: consider Saturday in order to be more inclusive.

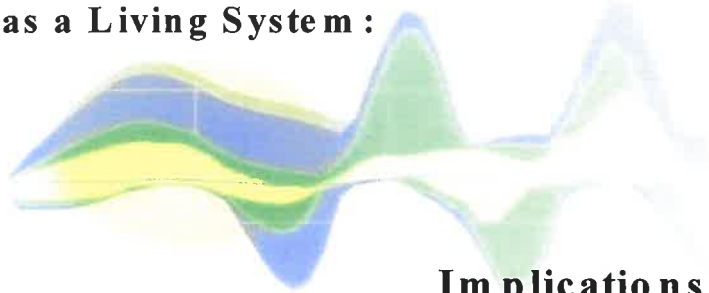
Pope John Paul II, in 1996, expressed the hope that ecclesial movements [would] offer a "joint witness" and "in communion with the Pastors and linked with diocesan

programmes, [bring] their spiritual, educational and missionary riches to the heart of

the Church ..."

L'Osservatore Romano
English edition, 29 May 1996,
p. 2).

The Pastoral Context as a Living System :



Implications for Theology and Practice

The following is a summary of a paper presented by Sr. Anne Codd, Resource person for the Commission, at Milltown Institute Pastoral Conference in November 2008. The full text is published in Who Do you Say I Am?, Thomas Grenham (ed.), Dublin; Veritas, 2009.

Note: This paper will be the basis of a key-note address which I have been invited to give at the Living Theology Conference in UK next July. The title which has been agreed is 'The Parish as a Living System: perspectives on communion and collaboration'. I would be very willing to test the address ahead of 26 July in a group (or two) of diocesan and parish pastoral ministers/workers. AC

For some years now I have been exploring the possibilities of taking an organic/systemic view of ourselves as faith communities, and of the contexts in which we live and fulfil our mission. There is ample foundation for this perspective in present-day ecclesiology. The vision of Church as communion is widely acknowledged to be close to the core of Vatican II. In adopting this stance, the Council validated a development in Catholic theology which originated in the nineteenth century, primarily in Tübingen, Germany, and continued to emerge in the rich renewal of biblical, liturgical, patristic and pastoral theology in the first half of the twentieth century.

Church as Communion

Communion ecclesiology may be summarised as follows: (1) the basis of all communion is the familial relationship with God to which we are invited in fulfilment of our creation in God's image and likeness; (2) this communion has been realised in a

unique way in history through the incarnation. 'Jesus Christ is the quintessence of all communion between God and human beings';¹ and (3) it is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the Church and in hearts of believers who forms the church into a 'unity of communion with God and among its own members'.²

The Synod of Bishops which marked the 20th anniversary of Vatican II grappled seriously with the implications of communion as a central theme in both *thinking about* church (vision) and also in *organising it* in practice (structures). On the one hand, the idea of communion can be understood in such a mystical way as to have no bearing on how church community is organised in practice. On the other hand, the same idea can lead to a multiplication of committee-like structures that may lead the church into bureaucracy and easily depersonalise community.

John Paul II upheld the centrality of communion, and invoked it widely, as for instance in '*At the Beginning of the New Millennium*' he says:

... the spirituality of communion, by prompting a trust and openness wholly in accord with the dignity and responsibility of every member of the People of God, supplies institutional

¹ Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, p. 152.

² Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, p. 152.

reality with a soul.³

Pope Benedict XVI, too, is keeping communion alive as a central motif ...

The love-story between God and [humanity] consists in the very fact that ... communion of will increases in a communion of thought and sentiment.⁴

Dialogue partners

As an exercise in practical theology, I am trying to set our vision of church as communion (which is hierarchically-ordered) in dialogue with an open-system view of organisation, in light of the fact that the Church is community of baptised and believing human beings. We may in truth envisage ourselves as the mystical body of Christ. We are also involved in local and global community which of its nature has an organisational structure i.e. is an institution.

Obviously, my interest at present is the contribution that systems thinking can bring to theological reflection and pastoral practice, but I am sure that theology has potential to enrich organisational studies also – as illustrated, for example, in the shift to what Stephen Covey calls ‘the character ethic’, and the deep wisdom of people like Peter Senge, illustrated in his 2005 edition of the ‘*The Fifth Discipline*’.⁵

Open systems

The key characteristics of open systems are that they are dependent on flows of personnel, resources and information from and to their environments (schools and hospitals are good examples from the non-profit sector). Purpose is a key concept – what difference the organisation (viewed as open system) is to make in its environment. The boundary of the system is in fact generated by its purpose. Open systems are marked by flexible boundaries, which enable it to be both sensitive and responsive to changing conditions (needs) in the environment. In class, I find the image of

skin, as the ‘boundary’ of the body extremely useful in exploring these ideas.

Implications of the dialogue

It is easy to draw analogies with Church, but it is important that these are not limited to the superficial level. The implications of this dialogue for the way we envisage ourselves as church and how we approach pastoral ministry, development and planning could be far-reaching. I will indicate some which come easily to mind.

Church, community of persons

We are challenged in our day to reimagine the separateness (autonomy) of human being without resorting to individualism. We are undeniably relational beings who need community. What follows are merely pointers to ways in which truly relational approaches would impact on pastoral practice.

- As Peter Senge observes ‘when managers are committed to growing people ... or committed to using conversation as the core process of change, their practices reflect ... our innate desire to grow as human beings and to be in relationship with one another.’⁶ The same is true in the pastoral setting.
- A living-system view suggests structures that enable participation, and that give visible expression to who we say we are. The scope for developing these structures, even within present church discipline, has by no means been exhausted.
- The roles which members assume in organisations are, in systemic terms, inseparable from the relations and responsibilities which connect persons-in-role with all others in the system. It is obvious that there is need for ongoing reflection on how roles, relations and responsibilities impact on mission.
- Liturgical practice has been a focus of renewal in church life for over 40 years, and even though there is no easy consensus regarding the direction of that renewal, it is true to say that celebrations can be, with imagination and effort,

³ John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 44.

⁴ Benedict XVI *Deus caritas est*, 17.

⁵ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline, the Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*, [hereafter *Fifth Discipline*] (New York: Doubleday, 2006)

⁶ Senge, P., *Fifth Discipline* p. 366

highly relational. Our developing Catholic sacramental theology highlights the essential connection of ritual with life and of Eucharist with community.

- The relationality of ministry involves much more than quality in service. The personal faith and goodness of the pastoral minister is integral to the exercise and effectiveness of ministry. Quoting a colleague, Senge observes: 'the primary determinant of the outcome of an intervention is the inner state of the intervenor'.⁷ 'Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? The one with clean hands and pure heart.' (Ps 24.)
- In the exercise of ministries of pastoral care, relational approaches rescue the practice from simply providing for the other's need (or, indeed, the need of the minister!). Authentic pastoral ministry is always mutual, enriching and empowering both those who receive and those who give.

Church practice at many levels

A willingness to see patterns replicated throughout an organisation is a key to thinking systemically. Instead of breaking things up into smaller parts, it is very helpful to look at the whole and to observe the patterns and the relationships which repeat themselves.

- A systemic approach suggests that it is impossible to transform in a sustainable way groups or sections within a parish (or diocese) while passing over others because they are, perhaps, too complex or indeed too delicate!
- Neither new persons, groups, committees etc., no matter how skilled or gifted, nor new super-structures no matter how rational or inspired, can work to their brief, no matter how visionary, if roles and relations of existing personnel and groups are not reviewed and reconstituted in the process.
- In our time, much spirituality is individualistic, and places sometimes exclusive emphasis on personal life journeys. I suggest that the task of reintegrating our spirituality and our ecclesiology can be greatly advanced

through the imagery of the living-system, especially when it is accompanied by experiences which bring to consciousness and to action the deep relatedness of person and community, of ecclesia and cosmos.

- One of the most far-reaching implications of a living systems approach lies in how it calls members, as individuals and as groups, to see themselves always within the whole. In our pastoral communities as elsewhere we slip all too easily into blaming some or all of 'the others' for perceived or real absence of vision, cohesion, and collaboration. This practice has no place within a living system approach. If there is a problem, an inadequacy or a failing, then all members are part of the cause (it's not so easy to call it blame when we share it), and all have responsibility for finding ways to move the system forward towards greater authenticity.

Author and poet Paul Williams expresses this challenge:

We hate our enemies
To provide ourselves in advance
With excuses for possible failure

Only when we give up
the comforts of pessimism
the luxury of enemies
the sweetness of helplessness
can we see beyond our own doubts.⁸

- Senge agrees with what we know intuitively – systems-thinking alone will not lead to the lasting, far-reaching changes. For such transformation there is need for leaders who are attuned to and skilled in enabling the forward thrust of the system.

Dialogue in Church

Belief that the Spirit is given to the total church is the basis of Walter Kasper's claim that dialogue is 'the primary language' of the faith community.⁹ Dialogue is increasingly evident in discerning and planning processes

⁸ *Common Sense*, www.paulwilliams.com

⁹ Kasper, W., *An Introduction to Christian Faith*, London: Burns and Oates, 1980.

⁷ *Fifth Discipline* p. 372

around the world, where people move together to a systems approach. Participants in the pastoral conference 08 experienced the world café process (www.theworldcafe.org) as a very effective means of enabling dialogue.

Through real dialogue the unity of mission and diversity of gifts for life and ministry can be recognised, developed and celebrated.

Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Commission for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development is a Commission of the Bishops' Conference which operates within the Department of Worship, Pastoral Renewal and Faith Development. Its purpose is:

- to gather, analyse and disseminate information on pastoral renewal and adult faith development
- to support current initiatives in these areas
- to highlight evolving needs and promote creative responses
- to support dioceses in furthering their own pastoral renewal and adult faith development initiatives
- to liaise on a regular basis with diocesan pastoral councils or diocesan personnel appointed to pastoral renewal and adult faith development, and with lay Catholic organizations concerned with these issues
- to establish links and facilitate communication with other Commissions and Agencies of the Irish Episcopal Conference so as to model a spirituality of communion
- to represent the Irish Episcopal Commission for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development where appropriate
- to execute other related tasks as agreed from time to time with the Executive Administrator of the Commissions and Agencies of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

Appendix 2

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION AND ADVISORY BOARD

TERM BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 2008

COMMISSION

Bishop Jim Moriarty (Chair)
Bishop Bill Murphy
Bishop Frank Lagan
Bishop Donal McKeown
Bishop Seamus Freeman

ADVISORY BOARD

NORTHER REGION

Dioceses of Armagh Province (except Meath)

Fr. Andrew McNally, Armagh
Mr. Brian McKee, Down and Connor

EASTERN REGION

Dioceses of Dublin Province (with Meath)

Fr. Lar O'Connor, Ferns
Sr. Anne Frances Carroll, Dublin
Mr. Joe Tynan, Meath

SOUTHERN REGION

Dioceses of Cashel Province

Sr. Emmanuel Leonard, Cloyne
Ms Nóirín Lynch, Limerick

WESTERN REGION

Dioceses of Tuam Province

Ms Mary Connell, Tuam
Fr. Muredach Tuffy, Killala

CATECHETICS COMMISSION

Mr. Brendan O'Reilly, National Director for Catechetics

CORI

Sr. Marianne O'Connor, OSU, Director General,

IMU

Fr. Eamonn Aylward, SSCC, Executive Secretary,

KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBANUS

Mr. Charles McDonald, Former Chief Knight,

Resource Person for the Commission: Sr. Anne Codd pbvm

Administrative secretary: Ms. Bernie Martin

Appendix 3

PASTORAL RENEWAL AND ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND ADVISORY BOARD 24 September 2008

Summary Account

Bishop Lagan who chaired the meeting emphasised how important the Advisory Board is for the Commission and as a most important link between it and dioceses and parishes.

Roles of Advisory board and its members

There was a lengthy discussion on the work of the Commission and Advisory Board. The review of Convention 08 were included. There is a gap between the Commission and those working on the ground, and the challenge that faces this new group is to find ways to bridge that gap.

There is need for clarity re parish renewal. The focus of Advisory Group needs to be on how to achieve this. Likewise for adult faith development. Should the group should be considering the core problems that beset the church at the present time, and moving towards a National Plan for Parish Renewal and Adult Faith Development?

The purpose of The Commission is: support of the Dioceses, highlight new issues, suggest responses and enable development

The role of the province/regional representatives has not been worked out. Finding a role at diocesan level is more manageable. What reps bring to the region from here needs to be clarified. When there is a specific project - structures will grow around that project.

The discussion on the role of the Advisory Board and the province representatives is ongoing.

It was noted that IMU is normally associated with sending missionaries. Now it is turning to Faith Development in relation to whole church. No parish is complete without a sense of mission. IMU partners one diocese each year. Missionaries work in name of church, and mission churches are incorporated into whole church.

Subgroups and Projects Membership of subgroups was opened but not finalised.

- **Laity:** The Pastoral Conference, 29 - 30 September is specifically designed to promote dialogue; after the meeting there was a planning session for those involved.
- **Parish:** This year Domhnall O'Neill's work will take up where it left off in June. Project this year will be based on how the internet can be used to meet some needs of diocesan personnel.
- **Youth:** A draft of the summary of the framework document for **youth ministry** was circulated. consultation continues.
- **Family:** currently an interim working group for the family has been asked to draft terms of reference for a Commission, and to carry out a consultation re structures and resources that are required to support and develop the practice of family ministry in the Irish Church. Bishop Murphy and Sr. Anne are members of the working group on behalf of the Commission.

Review of meeting:

- the question of role of Advisory Board and reps, and links with the dioceses is still fluid.
- Questions raised deserve attention.
- The work on PPC guidelines is a good model of how the Commission can support diocesan efforts.
- the meeting format could be improved
- Bishop Donal sounded a hopeful note, given the energy in the meeting and the willingness to keep questioning. The way forward will emerge.

**PASTORAL RENEWAL AND ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT
MEETING OF COMMISSION AND ADVISORY BOARD 18 February 2009:**

Summary Account

The meeting was well attended by representatives of the four regions, IMU and Knights of Columbanus. Bishop McKeown attended and chaired the meeting.

1 *Regional meetings: feedback and follow-up*

Regional representatives reported on their spring meetings. These were well attended. Newcomers would need some induction to gain familiarity with the structures and processes of the Bishops' Conference.

(1) Domhnall O'Neill's work was greatly appreciated and the intranet is eagerly awaited. (2) The forthcoming framework document for youth ministry raised interest especially in the west. The decision to set up an implementation group had mixed reception – there is a fear of further groups and meetings. (3) A lot of attention was given to planning a conversation on parish grouping to take place at convention on 21 May.

Issues raised: the need to invest time in the regional meetings; the need for a common language relating to pastoral development to emerge; the need for support in relation to employment structures; the need for clarity on who supports RCIA

Outcome of discussion at Advisory Board: The eve of Pentecost was the popular choice for the launch of the Youth Ministry document. The terms of reference of the implementation group need to identify key groups (notably NCDYD), personnel and areas in youth ministry, link in with National Catechetical Directory and those involved in safeguarding children. The Bishops' Commission is to present the Terms of Reference to the Conference for approval.

Convention on 21st May will be a full day. In part it is an AGM, drawing from regions and from ongoing work. There may be information re the international Eucharistic Congress in 2012 and other forthcoming events.

It was agreed that the session on parish grouping would be planned as 'beginning a national conversation'. An ad hoc group will work with Anne on planning this.

Responsibility for RCIA - Commission for Liturgy is the one mainly concerned. Commissions for Liturgy and for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development meet at Department level. The question can be raised there.

Re Synod on Word: Dr. Seamus O'Connell is keen on the integration of study of the Word into the pastoral life of the church. It is hoped that follow-up from the Synod will work with preparation for Eucharistic Congress.

2 *Movements and associations of the faithful*

Re conference on 4th March. It was hoped that the day will encourage dialogue involving the movements and associations of the faithful.

3 *Subgroups*

A working group has been established to examine the structures of family ministry support by the Bishops' Conference. It will be chaired by Bishop Jones, chair of the Pastoral Care Department.

Bishop Murphy and Sr. Anne will be members. Family ministry and married persons will be represented. It will report in Autumn 09.

4. Review of meeting

- o Members expressed a measure of satisfaction with progress on developing their roles. The task of building up communication at all levels is challenging. The burden of work continues!
- o Parish grouping has to be in a direction that excites people - it will not come from just trying to get something done. IMU thinking about this also. How to be messengers of hope in time of recession? See ICJSA: Poverty in post Celtic Tiger Ireland.
- o Many people at diocesan and more local level are eager for help. There are issues in practice re good use of time and developing interconnection.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ON ADVISORY BOARD: WORKING DESCRIPTION OF TASK
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October 2008

From discussions and reflection so far, the following are emerging as elements of the 'job description' of regional representatives:

- o Develop communication links with diocesan personnel in the dioceses represented (how this might be done is a matter for the two/three reps in each region).
- o Participate in the 3 meetings which take place annually with representative(s) of the Bishops' Commission (September, February and May).
- o Bring current issues in pastoral renewal and adult faith development to the agenda. This will require collaboration with the resource person in preparation of the agenda, giving sufficient time for all members to receive the agenda and prepare for the meeting.
- o Contribute to discussion and planning in response to agenda items.
- o Participate in a subgroup (or perhaps task-group) most suited to individual interests.
- o Collaborate with resource person in arranging, planning and running the Spring province meetings, where tasks are brought forward.
- o Collaborate with the resource person in arranging, planning and running the annual convention where the year's work is reported and reviewed, and future work is generated.
- o Collaborate with resource person in discerning, designing and running the pastoral conference, where the Commission reaches out to a wide constituency of pastoral interests.
- o Take other regional initiatives in pastoral renewal and adult faith development as time allows.

PARISH-ORIENTED ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT: SURVEY RESULTS



Commission for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development

Adult Faith Development Questionnaire Feedback

Parish-oriented Adult Faith Development Project 2008-09

Context

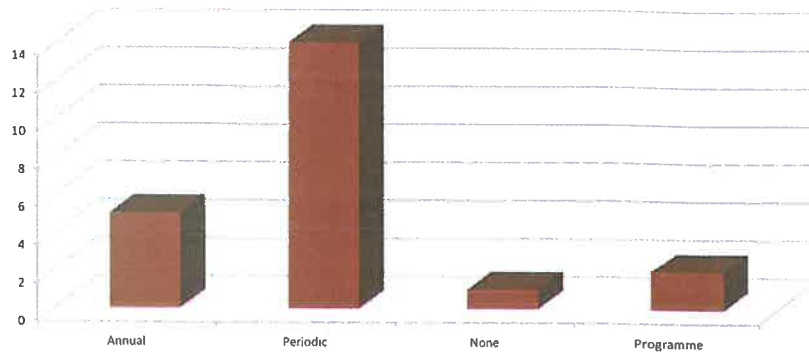
- Issued questionnaire to all 26 dioceses
- Returns from 22 dioceses
- Responses from 20 dioceses (some more than 1 response)
- Not an assessment or evaluation on ARE in the diocese
- Seeking to understand how you go about your business of being an ARE practitioner
- Will form a significant input into the functionality required on the nascent ARE website.

Section 1

Design Process

1.1 Deciding on Programmes, Themes & Topics

- Q1. Is a full-year programme planned at the start of the year or is there a more frequent planning exercise?

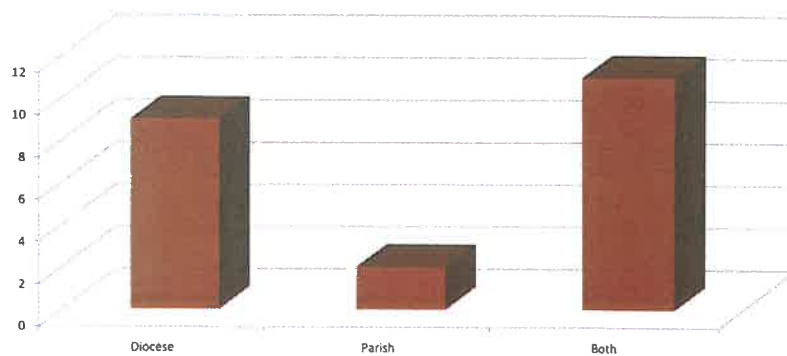


Section 1

Design Process

1.1 Deciding on Programmes, Themes & Topics

- Q2. Are the programmes planned for the whole diocese or for specific parishes?

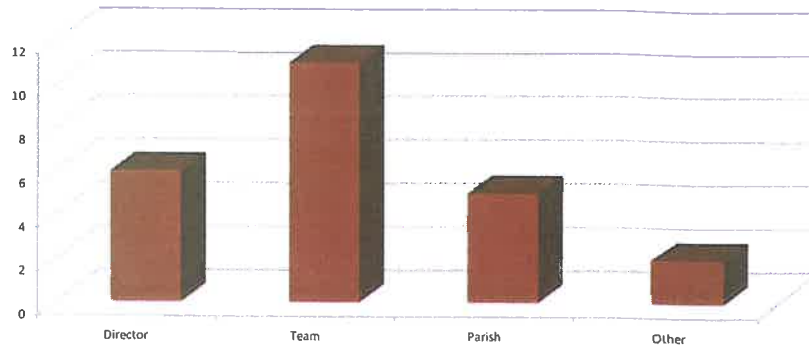


Section 1

Design Process

1.1 Deciding on Programmes, Themes & Topics

- Q3. Who is involved in deciding the programme?

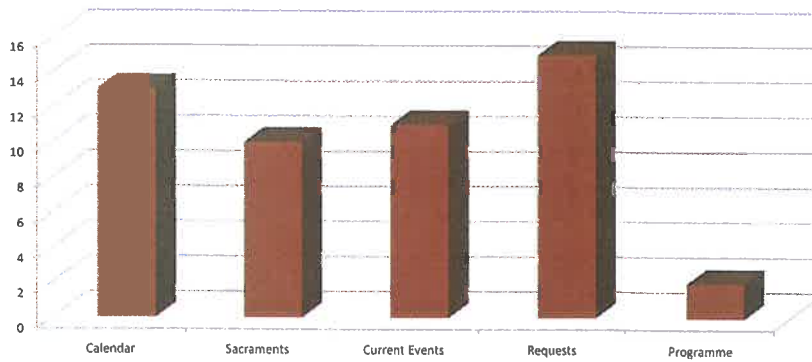


Section 1

Design Process

1.1 Deciding on Programmes, Themes & Topics

- Q4. What factors influence the themes for your AFF programmes?

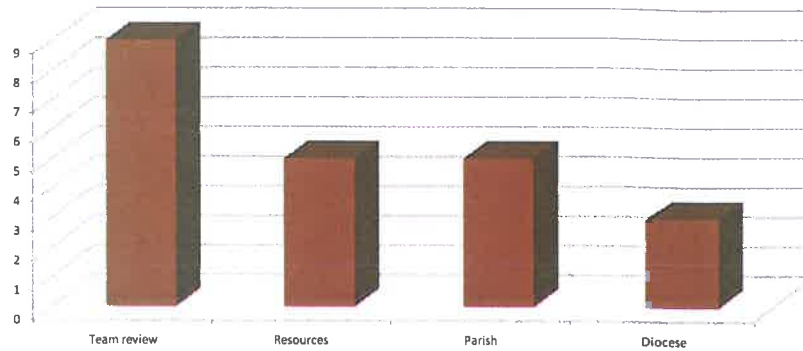


Section 1

Design Process

1.1 Deciding on Programmes, Themes & Topics

- Q5. How is the decision made to pick the theme?

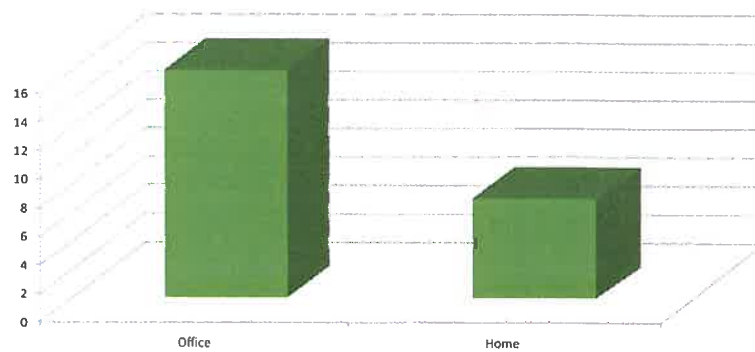


Section 1

Design Process

1.2 Work Group Location

- Q1. Do you work from home or in an office?

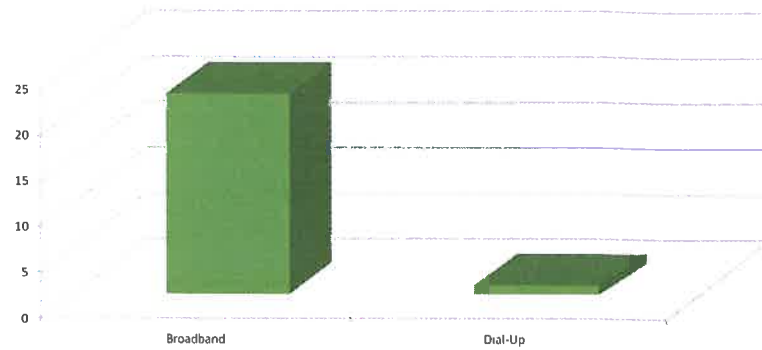


Section 1

Design Process

1.2 Work Group Location

- Q2. Do you have access to the Internet? Is it broadband or dial-up?

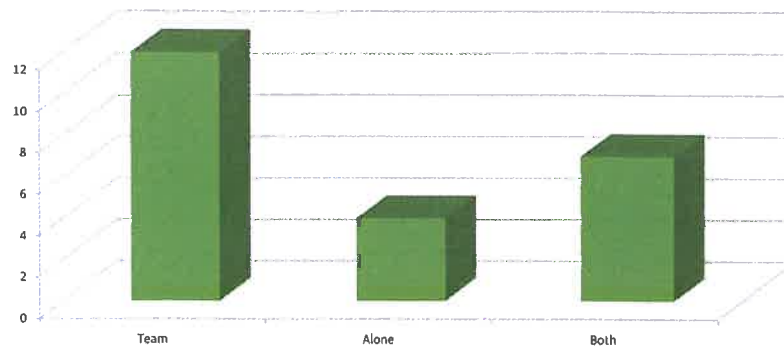


Section 1

Design Process

1.2 Work Group Location

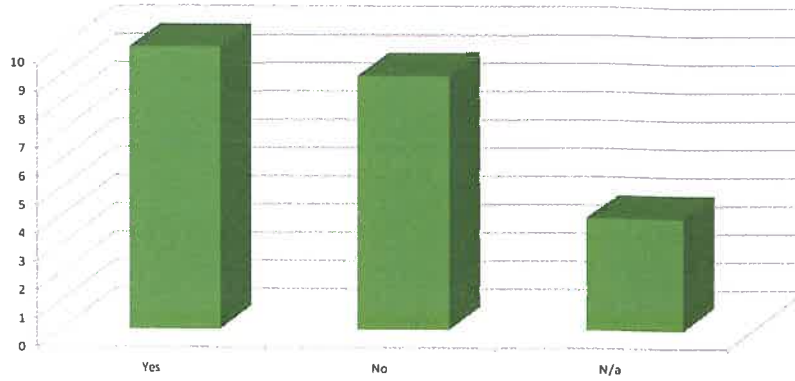
- Q3. Do you work alone or as part of a team?



Section 1 Design Process

1.2 Work Group Location

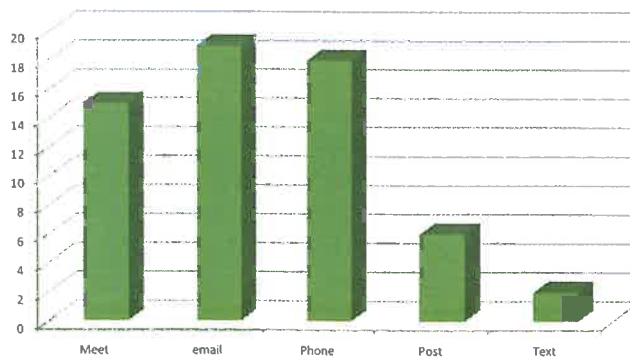
- Q4. Do you work at the same location as your colleagues?



Section 1 Design Process

1.2 Work Group Location

- Q5. How do you communicate with your colleagues?

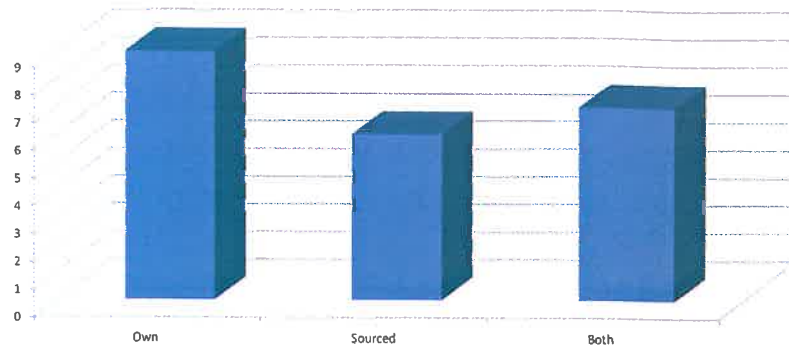


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q1. Do you prefer to write your own material or do you prefer to source it elsewhere?

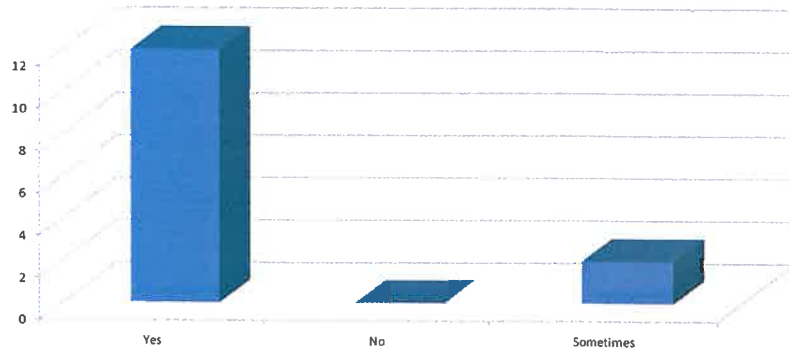


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q2. If you source it elsewhere do you change it to suit your own parish or diocese?

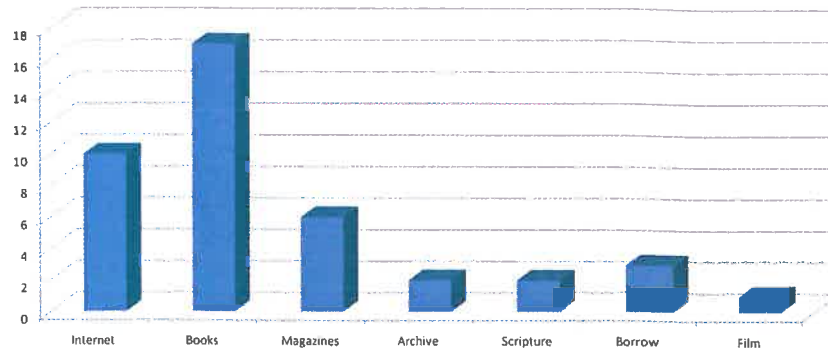


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q3. Where do you find the material that you use ?

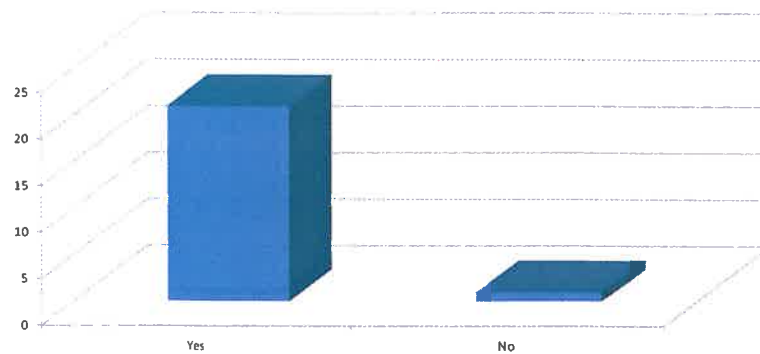


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q4. Do you use the Internet as a source of information?

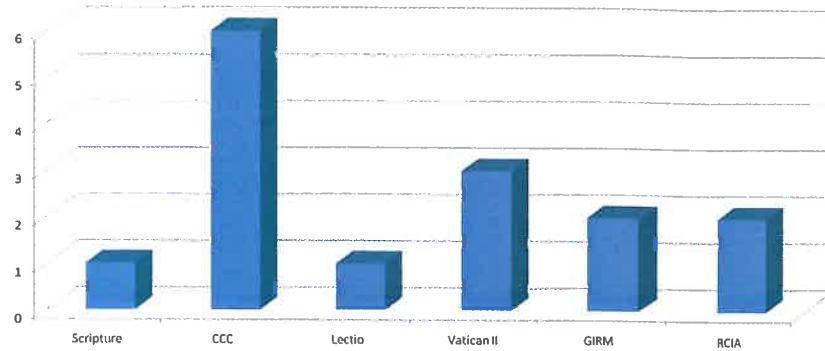


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q5. Do you use reference books as a source of information?

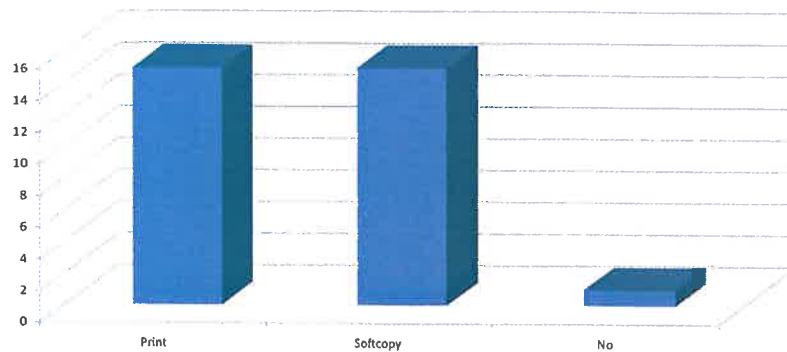


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q6. Do you use Papal Documents or Episcopal Letters as a source of information?

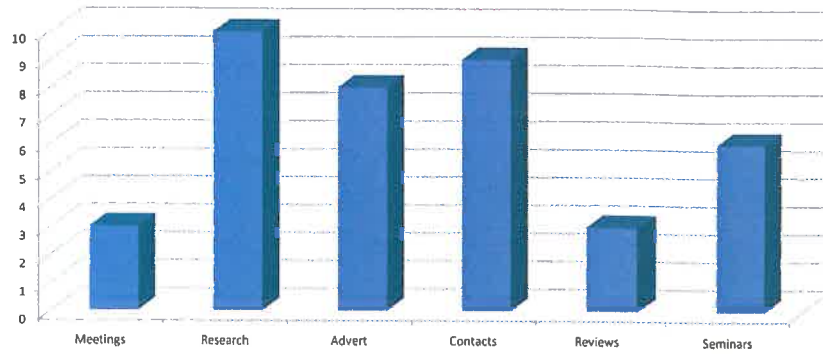


Section 1

Design Process

1.3 Researching the Topics

- Q7. How do you find out about new sources of information?

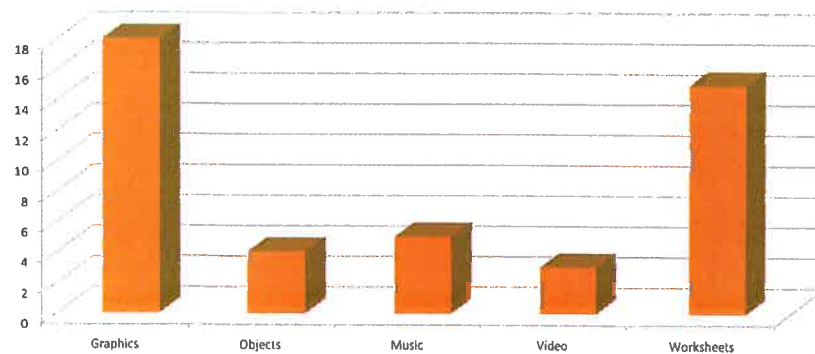


Section 1

Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

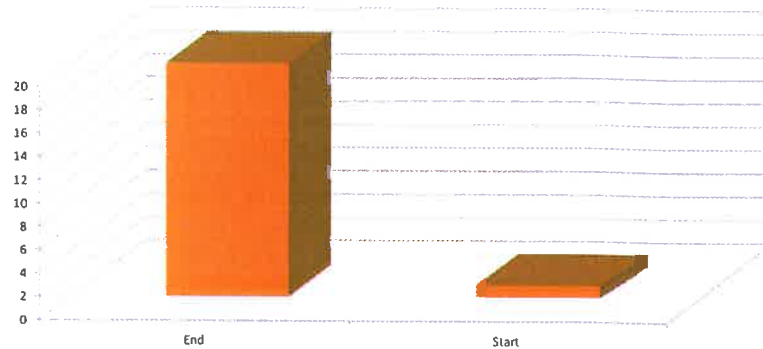
- Q1. Do you use visual/aural aids in your sessions?



Section 1 Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

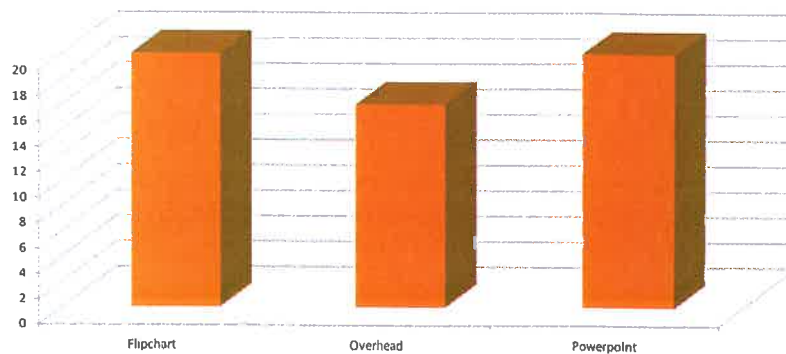
- Q2. Do you give people handouts at the end of the sessions?



Section 1 Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

- Q3. Do you use a flipchart, a projector or computer in your sessions?

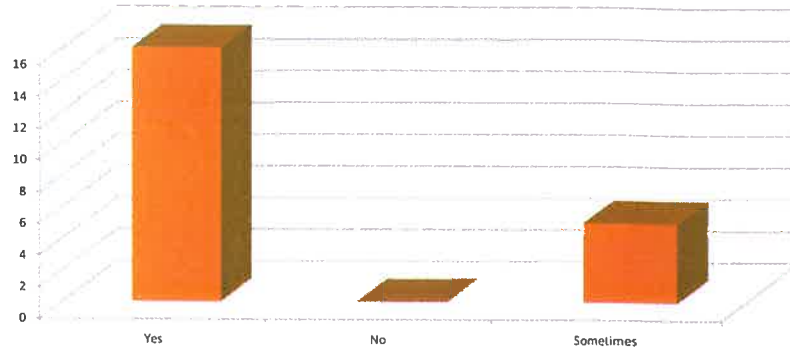


Section 1

Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

- Q4. Do you check your materials and programs with someone prior to delivery?

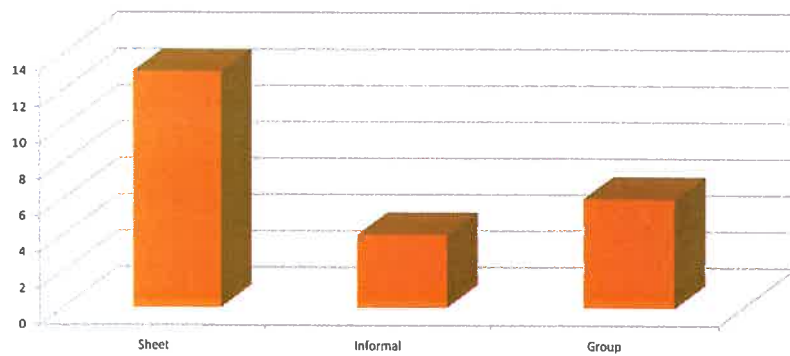


Section 1

Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

- Q5. How do you evaluate your sessions?

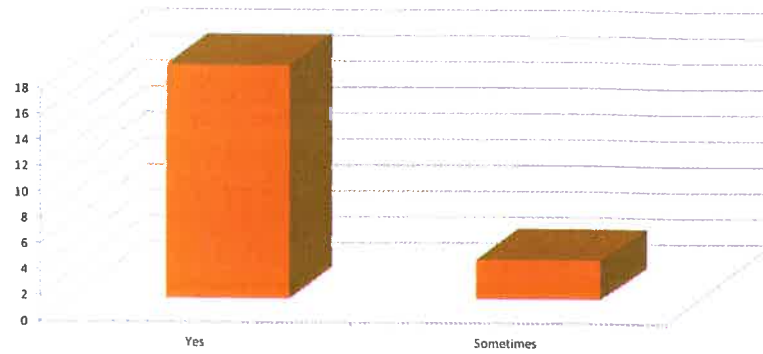


Section 1

Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

- Q6. Do you keep an archive of your material?

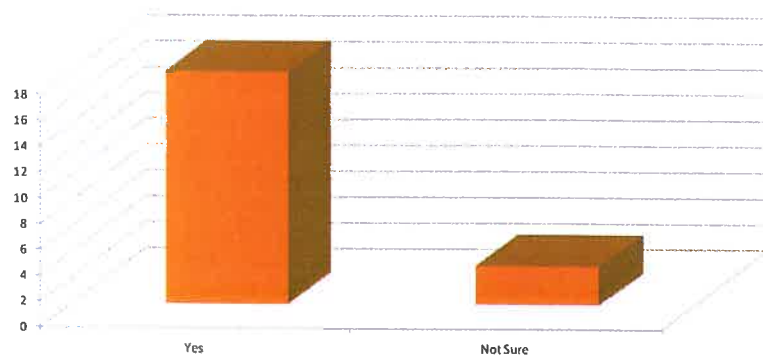


Section 1

Design Process

1.4 Presenting the Topic

- Q7. Would you like to share your material with others?

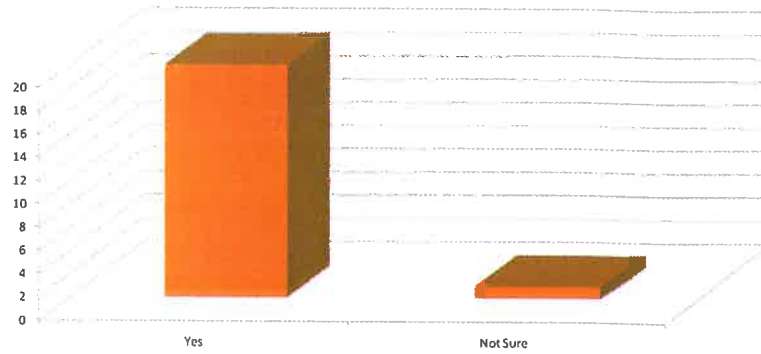


Section 1

Design Process

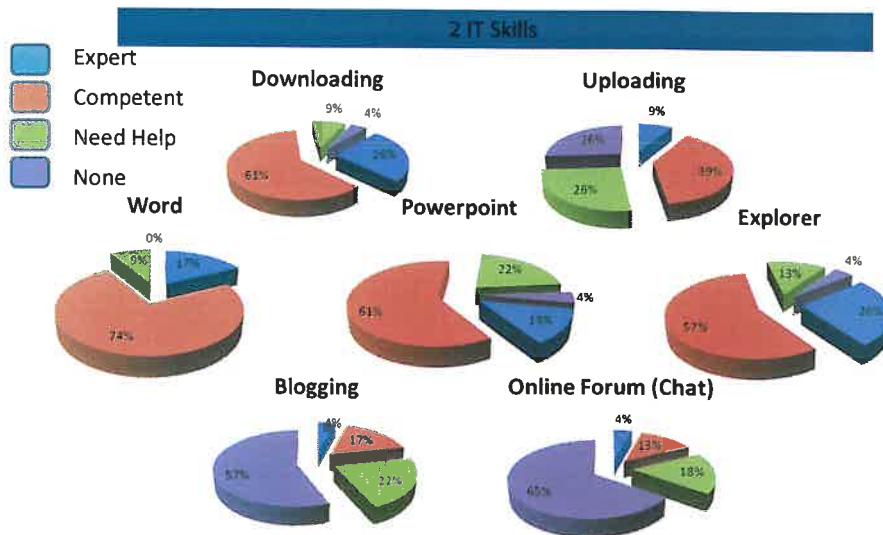
1.4 Presenting the Topic

- Q8. Would you like to have other people share their material with you?



Section 2

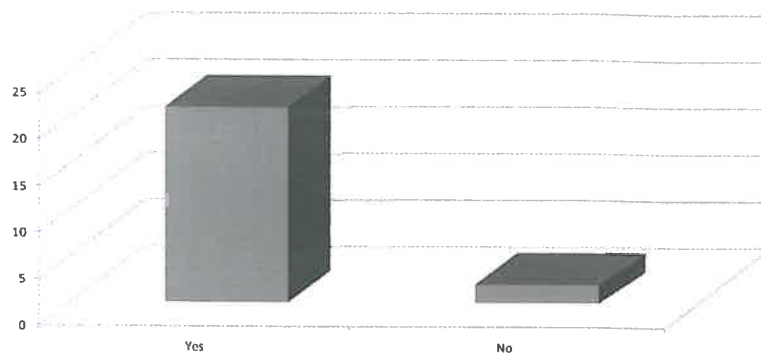
I.T. Skills Assessment



Section 3 Self Care Assessment

3 Self Care

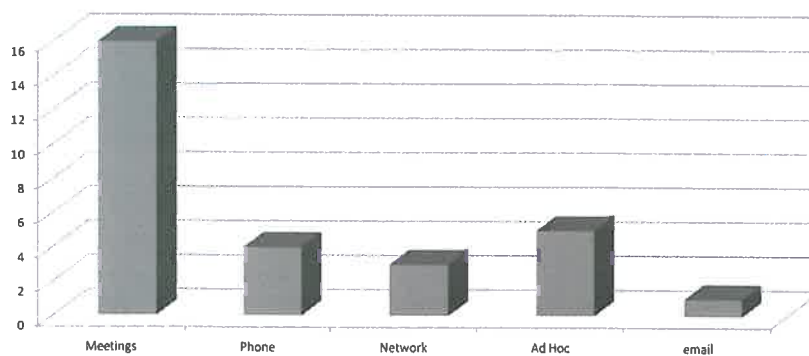
Q1. Do you have contact with other people working in the area of Adult Faith Formation?



Section 3 Self Care Assessment

3 Self Care

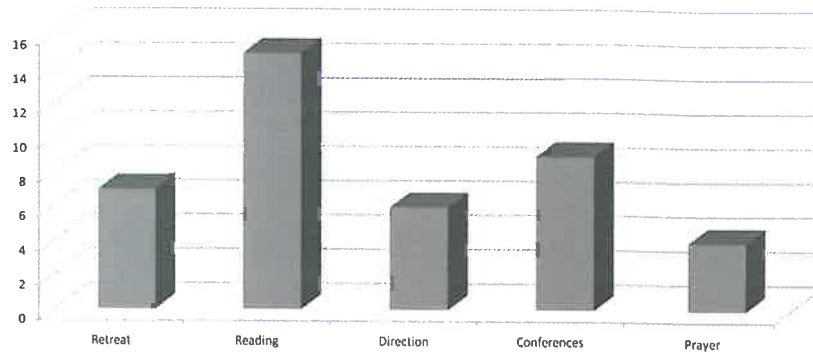
Q2. How does this contact happen and how often?



Section 3 Self Care Assessment

3 Self Care

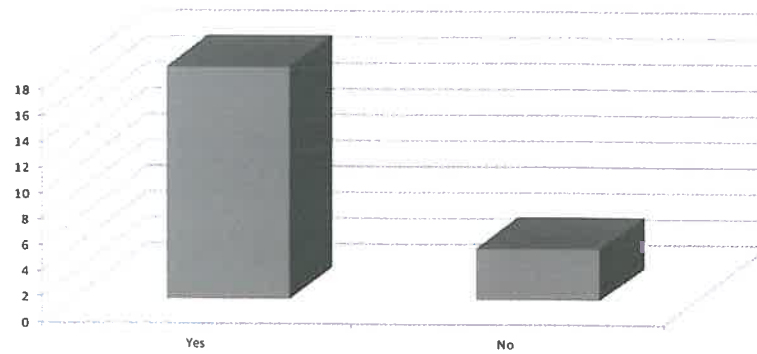
Q3. How do you look after your own spiritual, theological and pedagogical needs?



Section 3 Self Care Assessment

3 Self Care

Q4. Are you made aware of upcoming seminars or conferences related to AFF?

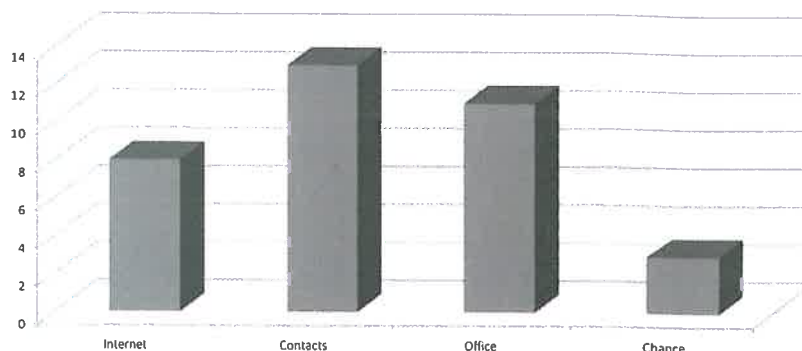


Section 3

Self Care Assessment

3 Self Care

Q5. How do you find out about new developments in the field of AFF?



Other Comments

- Promotion by parish leadership to address what, who, how is Church today?
- There is a perceived or real lack of enthusiasm among pastoral leaders
- Diocesan personnel are not involved exclusively in Adult Religious Education
- National vision needed
- Durable diocesan structures needed
- To promote the intellectual and emotional engagement for adults, creative and courageous initiatives needed
- Short-term parish/pastoral area programmes needed
- Solid foundation in faith and spirituality is essential for people considering involvement in parish ministry
- Diocesan personnel would welcome 1 or 2 meetings per year, with ongoing/occasional communication.

NEW ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS – GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Adapted from 'Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development' in Intercom March 2009, p.23

Lay associations, new movements in the Church

... In this work, the Commission is very much in tune with developments in our Church world-wide. There are over 120 'movimenti' which have been granted official recognition,¹⁰ on the Directory of International Associations of the Faithful, published by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. In recent times (1998 and 2006) this Council has hosted two world congresses of lay ecclesial movements in Rome. Accounts of these can be found on the website of the Council. In John Paul II's address in 1998 we read:

If, on the one hand, [a particular association, group or movement] certainly cannot exhaust or capture the wealth of forms produced by the life-giving creativity of Christ's Spirit, on the other, it [is] a concrete ecclesial reality with predominantly lay membership, a faith journey and Christian witness which bases [itself] on a precise charism given to the person of the founder in specific circumstances and ways.

In March 2008, the Catholic Common Ground Initiative in the US dedicated its annual Cardinal Bernardin Conference to the interaction between lay ecclesial movements and the local church. The aim was not to reach consensus on any or all issues, but rather to engage in structured dialogue. In this way the hope was that participants would leave with 'fewer misunderstandings and a more nuanced picture of how and why these movements are part of the Church'. A comprehensive and interesting account is published in the Initiative Report, August 08.¹¹

At the international conference on pastoral ministry which was hosted by the Milltown Institute last November, Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP highlighted the need for 'reanimation' of lay groups in the church, as a means of renewal of faith, life and mission.

Difference, tension and unity

It is widely acknowledged in the addresses and reports coming from all the events just mentioned that associations and movements offer to their members the experience of belonging in a community, nurture for their spiritual life, and a focus for living their Christian mission and ministry. Anyone who has ever been engaged in the mainstream ministries of diocese or parish knows how challenging it is to offer this kind of experience within the community as a whole. And so it happens that '...there is a natural ... tension between institution and charism, but ... the Holy Spirit bestows gifts on both the hierarchically ordered church and the movements that are part of it'.¹² These gifts, ultimately, are for service both in the Church and in the world. And it is in service of a shared mission that unity can be found.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* no 31. The address of John Paul II to the Congress of 1998 is available in English on the website of the Pontifical Council

¹¹ See www.nplc.org/pdf/commonground/report_0808.pdf

¹² Initiative Report, p.4