

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF DELEGATES OF SOUTH LIVERPOOL PASTORAL AREA SYNOD GROUP

**WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 2019, 7.30PM
ST PATRICK'S PARISH CENTRE**

The Inaugural Meeting of Delegates of South Liverpool Pastoral Area convened by Canon Anthony O'Brien. The main aim of this was for members present (priest, deacon, laity) to briefly introduce themselves and exchange some basic points before 13 February.

Canon O'Brien started with a brief account of the Limerick Diocesan Synod process and listing 6 important themes arising from the Limerick Synod:

1. Community
2. Faith Forum
3. Pastoral Care of Family
4. New Models of Leadership
5. Liturgy and Life
6. Young People

There were a number of initial comments and questions raised by members relating to

- Focus Groups
- Issues outside the laid down terms
- Acknowledgements of topics that cannot be legislated for
- Those proposals not formally itemised by Synod where clarification is needed
- Archbishop Malcolm has already made clear that some issues eg married clergy, women priests etc would be beyond the remit of Synod and presented separately to the Pope. There was a desire for us to seek clarification on what issues are considered outside of the remit of the Synod.

The main focus of the meeting centred on three discussion points

1. What are we hoping for, and looking forward to, in Synod?
2. Challenges that we will face during the process.
3. What initial key themes do we think will emerge from the process?

It was agreed by all present that a positive approach to all discussions must be kept up, enthusiasm maintained and encouraged and any scepticism rejected/discouraged.

Possible main themes suggested from the group were

- Evangelisation – real concern to welcome and evangelise the 'lost'/lapsed Catholics
- Emphasis on the theme of Mission, recently stressed in a recent Pastoral Letter
- Consideration of different cultures/family basis
- Catholic Schools – how can we recreate culture in the Church Community?

NB Jesus met people where they were. How can we do this?

- Baptism: still very prevalent but with different raisons d'êtres and frequent lack of desire for heavy commitment, child not necessarily nourished in faith or faith explained.
- Marriage: various reasons, as with Baptism. Importance of nourishing faith of couples and their children.
- Challenges: explanation of the Catholic faith; clear definition for people to hold onto, positive emphasis on the particular strengths of the Catholic Church.

Further general comments and queries from members present

- Fr Neil Ritchie commented that his parish community is small but vibrant, many coming from very strong practising families of strong ethos grounded in faith.
- Teenagers have questions about faith but schools are not always able to address these points because staff are sometimes less committed and informed.
- Challenge is how to listen, the wider context of faith, not just in relation to the worshipping groups.
- The challenge that we face trying to ascertain what are the difficulties and obstacles for people today to be in, remain part the church community and of faith groups. How do we listen, react and be clear ourselves regarding the issues that raise difficulties?
- Is there any ecumenical accompaniment planned? Some observers will be invited to attend, but not necessarily at a deep level.
- Can this be done at parish level? eg inviting local ecumenical persons to the parish meetings?
- Call to Holiness: how well is this being proclaimed and encouraged.
- Priesthood and priestly ministry and not just to the faithful. Greater authenticity and exercising of priestly ministries to be welcomed.
- Models of Leadership: very strong, fundamental theme (cf this very strong ex Limerick).

It is obvious that there are many potential issues and challenges, within the Pastoral Area we can help each other, support and sharing is key.

A Supporting Team, possible 'shadow' and help parish situation/meetings.

Finally it was suggested that a list of member's email addresses be signed and circulated.

The meeting ended approximately 8.45pm on a very positive and friendly note. Member's much appreciated this first opportunity given by Canon O'Brien to meet and share which will be repeated again.