

Year of Prayer, Listening and Discernment Responses from *Family of Parishes* 08: Carrigaline | Crosshaven | Monkstown | Passage West | Tracton Abbey

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Session 1. How can we make baptism the gateway into life in our faith community?

Carrigaline

1. More information via social media. Play groups. Family gatherings out in the community. inviting other cultures to the church and celebrating their cultures in fun ways such as a garden party. A baptism booklet with information about what baptism means and how to stay involved in the church when their child has been baptised. YouTube videos to communicate how to prepare for baptism. Members of the parish council could be assigned to meet with families preparing to baptise their child. Make Mass more interactive. Move more to keep their interest and focus. Interactive screens at Mass. Less judgement if the child makes noise, runs amuck, screams, during Mass. Have 'kids fun packs' with prayer books/colouring sheets to keep them engaged during Mass. Invite children/families to be part of Mass and events. They won't go if they're not asked or don't feel like they are wanted there. The parish newsletters could have a fun kids activity each week. Perhaps it could go online to reach a wider audience. Altar servers. Keep in mind that children and there and mention them especially during sermons, long Mass. Children's choir. Family Mass - maybe more frequently? Give more notice to people outside of the Church that events are coming up through social media, newspapers, big posters around the village. Become more visible. Let's be proud and loud about our faith rather than going to Mass and keeping it inside the doors of the church. encourage LGBTQI+ families to join and celebrate too.
2. I don't know. A prep. time e.g. an Alpha type course given by young parents as well as grandparents. Get parents to have a reflection/discussion time and a discernment time - why am I baptising my child? Do I really want my child to grow in faith? Am I prepared to actively support my child? Maybe have baptisms or some of them at Mass with faith community. Challenge the 'party after baptism'. Welcome pack/letter. Baptismal teams. Role of Godparents. Role for children at each Mass. Parent and toddler group. Follow up home visit after baptism.
3. Should baptisms be restrictive instead of it being offered even to those who do not need it? Should parents be included in the baptism training, most parents have no idea of what baptism represents? An inclusive baptismal education for both parents - educate the parents on the ethos, value and means of baptism for the purpose of suitability. A new orientation/campaign on the meaning, essence and value of baptism - synchronising the value of baptisms with the essence of life of children,

parents and the community. remodelling the practice and celebration of baptisms with its true sense.

4. We need to encourage the faith community to be more proactive towards those families preparing for baptism, we can support parents by encouraging and explaining to them what the consequences of baptism are. The barrier to bringing children to Mass and parish events is peer pressure among both children and parents. They need to be educated in the reasons for attending. We need to encourage the parents to be more proactive towards their religion and beliefs and be with their children at church activities.
5. Explain to parents what baptism is. It is the beginning of a life long journey. We need to be enthusiastic and welcoming to families to join our church community. Journey with people and encourage them to participate in church events. Put on events – toddler group – with relevant Christian input.
6. Baptism makes us citizens of Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular. At any ceremony for awarding Irish citizenship the joy on the faces of those receiving it is striking. By contrast those of us born as Irish citizens take it for granted and never experience that joy. Perhaps it is the same with baptism. I expect that those baptised as adults experience a joy that we who were baptised as children do not appreciate. Is there something we can do to address that? There is a renewal of baptism vows at Mass on Easter Sunday, but it is over in a minute or two and may not make a big impact on our lives. If baptism meant more to us as adults, it might help to make the consequences of it more meaningful for those between baptism and first communion.
7. Teaching the parents or guardians the importance of the sacrament of baptism for their children. Time for parents and children to celebrate the birth of the baby or babies. Be available to support and be encouraging to parents. Be there to keep and guide them and let them know when there are Masses for families. Encourage parents to bring children to Mass when they are free to do so.
8. Bring parents together after children are baptised. A little prayer service or gathering in the church to welcome new families and let them get to know each other and help each other. Maybe once a month? In large communities families with small children can feel isolated. This could help! Family Mass? Baptismal teams are already meeting families before baptism.
9. Being involved with parents who come to book baptism. They are very enthusiastic. They want this for their child. Its important for them as a naming ceremony. Baptism Teams helps as an introduction to the church community. Some years ago we used to bring children and parents back for a cup of tea and a small ceremony about 1/3 would come. The answer is with the parents. A lot of these parents have grown up with a very negative view of the Church. If they can see that the church in their community is a welcoming church where the priests are visible and are willing to listen to their thoughts. Around me tonight I see a lot of grey heads. We need young parents involved and their views are listened to. Baptism is the first

sacrament they have as parents and I don't know any parents who don't want the best for their child/children.

10. To be honest, I'm not sure. I'm not involved in this aspect of church life. I'm unsure of what exists already in terms of this sacramental preparation although I'm sure there are probably very good processes, supports, communication. I'm not sure what can be done to make people more comfortable. Baptism is a family choice. That I wouldn't interfere with in any way – live and let live. One thought though. A number of years ago a very good support document was put together for parents of Holy Communion/Confirmation students in the form of a 4 week course 'Sacramental Preparation for Parents.' Could something similar be done for parents?
11. Historically baptism is a tick box event for many people. For many years baptism was linked to original sin and baptism wiped the slate clean and if you were not baptised you were doomed. We have moved on so much thankfully but this history of baptism means that for many people baptism is a once off event. There is no sense of it being a gateway or a bridge to community life. For me this is a starting point. The whole theory of baptism needs to be explained to make it relevant for 2025 and the modern world we live in. We work with what we can and I feel families preparing for baptism is the first place to start in explaining what it is about, explaining it's the first of many steps that we take not on our own but together.
12. Invite parents to take part in a preparation programme for the baptism of their child. Create a welcoming space/area in the church for families with young children/infants. Try to have a team of volunteers of parents who recently had their children baptised to work with those preparing. Be flexible with the times/dates/day for baptism preparation and have the option of doing preparation online. Have a team of volunteers in the parish who will take turns at writing a letter of welcome to the child/children being baptised that is personal to the child and his/her family inviting them to participate in the life of the parish. Have a 'pray and play' group for the pre-school age children. Have a regular children's Mass at family friendly times. Share experiences of the part the Church plays in our lives and that it is there for everyone.
13. The parish can become more welcoming by just connecting families to their parish. This can be done by a welcome letter/visits to homes etc. Baptism teams to help prepare. Child-friendly liturgies. Engage with families by monthly gatherings, Masses etc.

Crosshaven

1. How do we encourage parents/guardians to bring their children forward for baptism? Can we do an information booklet/welcome pack. Are we not children of God if we're not baptised? Can we set up a 'parent and toddler' group post-baptism? Have a social element to our parish: coffee mornings, outings? Run mini courses for parents/future parents and educate them in the faith. Have the school

run 'faith based' days/outings to places of interest to learn the history of our faith in Ireland. Have 'family friendly' Masses, special children's Mass.

2. Extend the number who attend the baptism. Provide a token – happy baby clothes – inexpensive? Lots of candles. Joy. Flowers. Singing. Warm church. 3+4 children's liturgy. Explain cheerfully the welcoming side of baptism. Child of Jesus.
3. To make people of the _____ welcome when they approach to have children baptised. Maybe after Mass engage in conversation and offer support especially if they are new in the community. The schools to engage more with the active church e.g. Irish Saints days, May processions. The laity to take on an active role in helping.
4. Maybe when parents present their child for baptism they should be understanding of what baptism entails. Parents (some not all) regard it as a naming ceremony and party. We need to prepare parents more. Importance of Godparents.
5. Have baptisms celebrated during Sunday Mass – to make it feel like a community event and not a private, family affair. This might also encourage the people at Mass in their faith. When Jesus was baptised in the Jordan there were loads of baptisms on that _____ big crowds of people there – uplifting for everybody.

The Harbour Parishes

1. By welcoming them then by giving them all the assistance they need. By answering any questions they may have and encouraging them. Jesus said suffer little children so tell them children are most welcome even if they make a bit of noise at Mass. Ask children to perform little duties like lighting the pascal candle, bringing up the gifts etc. Encourage them and involve parents and children. Putting the baby in the crib etc. small little jobs make them feel special and wanted.
2. Between the schools and Church. if the priests and the teachers got together more often and make it more _____ to the children. If you can get the children to get their parents more involved. I am sure that would go a long way.
3. By inviting parents and family members for a short meeting to explain the true meaning of baptism through a liturgy of the Word of God (also bring Godparents to speak about their role). Encouraging parents to go to Mass. To continue to support and provide a room for children (small) and toddlers with stories from the bible and to take pre-Communion children to explain the Gospel in a child like way. By communicating with newsletters and conversation and making a yearly remembrance of the child's baptism.
4. If there were a few people who are trained for baptism to guide the parents of what is done for baptism so they will know what is happening. Having little books about Jesus to give to the children to look at the pictures that tell the story. Encouraging the parents to teach their children the simple prayers that they would say before going to bed – as we were taught by our own parents.

5. Baptism preparation _____ for parents/guardians (monthly Ballincollig). Baptism teams. Celebrate baptism at Mass. Preach about baptism as a gift and a gift that carries challenge/responsibility. Parish Baptism Preparation with using symbols of oil/garment/candle/prayers of the faithful. Baptism is a gateway towards levels of leadership. Have common approaches in Parishes in Dioceses to preparations – some kind of declaration of consent to the norms. Let testimony - _____ - be part of Sunday liturgy. Missalettes for children – a place to go for that – St. Elizabeth’s Room/St. Bernadettes.
6. When the parents decide to have their child baptised, the parents should have to attend 3-4 meetings with a baptism group – to let the parents understand how important it is for their baby to be baptised and also the responsibility of what the parents are undertaking. It’s not just about the day of baptism and the party. This is the first step into the Christian life of the child. If parents don’t understand then it’s only about the day. Following on from baptism is parents and children coming to Mass. Very often we have the child does not stay quiet at Mass – so what – unless the children are brought they will never know what is going on. Could the parish put on a children’s Mass at a different time say on a Saturday afternoon or whatever would suit. Parents may feel more comfortable if the baby or child cries. Parents are so busy now but if they understand what they take on, they may be more inclined to go. A lot of encouragement is needed – maybe the religious class in schools – could be work – with a group to encourage the children and parents. Children will only follow what the parents do.
7. More dialogue with families before baptism. 1) Why do they want to baptise their child, 2) the real meaning of baptism. Maybe make baptism more of a community occasion – part of the Sunday celebration – once a quarter, not every Sunday. Make it a big event in the church and family. Having children part of the liturgy going forward. When children are very young maybe some volunteers take the children to the sacristy to tell the story of the Gospel in simple language and draw pictures. Better explanation of Baptism and simple prayers. Maybe a baptism group – to visit the families once in a while to see how they are.

Tracton Abbey

1. For some people, baptism may be seen as a milestone or a social occasion in the life of their child. They baptise their child because it is the ‘right’ thing to do. Once the child is baptised, they may feel that the ‘box is ticked.’ We need to try and help them to understand that the sacrament of baptism is not a mere box to be ticked, but it is just the first step on a journey. Bringing a baby who may be less than twelve months old to Mass every Sunday can be difficult for parents. Already the journey has been disrupted. The parents need to understand the importance and significance of baptism. If the parents don’t appreciate it then the child will not get it.
2. Invite the parents to attend Mass before the baptism along with their parents and siblings. This could be their first visit to their local church. Making parents welcome in the sacristy and going through the ceremony with them. Family members may be

living abroad or not in the parents' parish so it's important that they will know the details of the ceremony in this country (card). Advise parents not to worry if a child is crying or making noise during the sermon. Bring the children along to the Mass and they will be familiar with the ceremony and the church. have a special children's Mass a few times during the year.

3. Invitation to parents to special information session before formal event. Supply parents with as much information as possible before baptism takes place. Ensure that Masses are family/child friendly. Try to make Mass a social as well as spiritual event. Maybe introduce informal church events during those 5 years post-baptism linking baptism and first Holy Communion.
4. Bringing baby to Mass in the run up to Baptisms. Baptism team. Baptism book – support families. When a baptism is booked, a priest contact the family and liaise with them and meet with them before the ceremony. The clergy are always welcoming of families including young children and babies. They are welcomed and blessed at Holy Communion time. Pastoral Council members always welcome people to our churches including children. Our older people regularly welcome newcomers. In Minane Church inside the three entrances 'listening area' where people can gather to talk before and after Mass. Having various events in the church welcoming everyone. We do welcome at first Holy Communion, Confirmation, Mass of Remembrance.
5. If parents are church goers, meet with them and explain/discuss reason for baptism. Role of sponsors/Godparents. Be aware of very young children attending Mass, include them and refer to family in homily/sermon. _____ some _____ at special times e.g. Christmas, Easter, Lent, Advent. Invite parents/grandparents to encourage families to attend church. Make church relevant to all ages in the community, encourage participation e.g. readers, choir, gifts at Mass, artwork. Schools – are they best to teach young children about Catholicism and is there need for separate tuition e.g. non-denominational schools.
6. Baptism team visitation and explanation. Encourage parents to bring children to Mass especially on occasions i.e. Christmas, Easter, family anniversary Masses. Make fuss and welcome them and have little treats after Mass i.e. Easter eggs (mini). Encourage parents at time of baptism to come to Mass as often as they can.

Session 2. How can priests, deacons and parishioners prepare for and celebrate the Sunday Eucharist so that we are nourished and strengthened to tell others about Christ?

Carrigaline

1. Separate typed sheet submitted: The Church draws her life from the Eucharist and the Eucharistic sacrifice is "the source and summit of the Christian Life" The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. In Baptism we are called to form one body - 'The Eucharist fulfils this call' (CCC 1396) and it is our hope of joining in the eternal life. When we receive the Eucharist, it is not as an individual but as a member of the body of Christ which is all the baptised. The church needs to be warm, inviting and welcoming. The Mass is a gathering for the baptised faith congregation and needs to be inclusive and encourage engagement and participation in the celebration. The laity need to change from being spectators to being participants and responding to the word of God. They should be encouraged to get involved in prayer, music, song, readings, Eucharist distribution and the other various ministries during the celebration of Mass e.g. collectors. Homilies need to be limited to 8-10 minutes (max) as recommended by Pope Francis in 2018. Need to be prepared and engaging otherwise minds wander and no one understands. Involvement in the faith community encourages friendship and helps people to create a more lively and vibrant church and grow in their understanding of the faith. Run Coffee morning once a month for mums and babies as a social outlet and help them engage with the church community. In Sacramental preparation there is an opportunity to engage more with the parents of young people to re-engage with their own faith. Maybe run a specific course to educate them on the basics of faith formation. Young people crave a sense of belonging, friendship and community. Maybe try and get them involved in a music group, music ministry/folk group/charismatic group etc. Bible and scripture group for the young. Because of weak foundations people are afraid to engage in discussion with others both young and old. We wouldn't build a house on sand. Run programmes to help build foundation: RCIA (back to the very basics for baptised members of the congregation), YouCat, Catechism in a year, Alpha, Sycamore. Explaining the importance of the Sacraments - God's gift to his Church. Explaining the importance and understanding of the Creed - not just reciting words at speed. People have a natural hunger for knowledge of the faith but are not being fed and are not sure where to find it. Living by faith is a lifestyle but many people want to treat living by faith as an emergency measure. If faith is not expressed in WORKS it is dead and cannot bear fruit (James 2:14-16).
2. Priests already stand outside and greet people as they enter the church, which is very welcoming. It is sad that more young people do not participate. Once Confirmation is over - there needs to be some way to keep these young people interested - perhaps get more of them involved in the liturgy - prayers, music etc. -

maybe once a month? A rota! Everyone seems to have time for sports, hobbies etc., so why not Church activities?

3. Have a welcome and helpful meetings to talk about the Mass. By helping one another during difficult times as well as during the good times. Showing compassion for people. Speaking to the parents or guardians as regards bringing young people to family Mass held in our parish once a month.
4. We in Carrigaline are very lucky to have priests who are very open and welcoming to all. I feel that most schools have music/singers. We hear them at F.H.C. and Confirmation. These should be encouraged to bring their music to Mass maybe once a month. They should be given general guidelines and see what they would come up with.
5. We need to educate the congregation to change their status from spectator to participant. Also remove the 'barrier' between priest and congregation. People need to be re-educated to act as Christians and pray daily. Support each other by becoming more active and open about our faith. Don't hide your light under a bushel! Young people are very influenced by media and peer pressure. They need to be educated to become a part of the worshipping community.
6. The venue/church needs to be warm, bright or welcoming. Parish community need to engage and make people feel welcome. Be on time, punctuality – not to be disturbing and distracting others. Priests need to make people feel welcome and be enthusiastic about what they are doing, not just going through the motions. For many people the faith foundation isn't there, it's like building a house on sand. We need to educate people. Read scripture in advance. Maybe prepare the following Sunday's Gospel and some points to reflect on and leave in the church mid-week so people can pick it up.
7. Priests and parishioners already seem to do much to prepare – its already dignified and joyful in my eyes. I really enjoy our priests' homilies – they are meaningful and always come away 'with a nugget.' How do we live out our faith? Faith is unique to each of us. The faith that I possess may not necessarily be the faith of my family or my friends, but where there's common ground is the belief in the goodness of God (whomever we see God as – be it Jesus, Allah, Buddha or the Higher Power – all one God). How do we show/share God's love – definitely do not inflict 'religion' on anyone – it could be seen as forceful / evangelising, rather give simple example of faith in good works connected to social justice, care of the earth and protection of vulnerable communities like migrants
8. Privately reading the Sunday readings in advance of Sunday Mass would help in preparing for Mass and focussing on the message of the readings that Sunday. There is a very good annual publication called 'God's Word' which has the Mass readings for each day and a short reflection on the readings. It can also serve as a diary. In parishes with a Mass rock, an open air Mass could be celebrated at the Mass rock once a year as a reminder of what Mass meant to our ancestors.

9. Know your fellow parishioners. Belonging. Database i.e. friends of the. Family of Parishes [list of parishes] text info. Tea and coffee? Socials? To be debated/courses.
10. Bringing something to prepare for and celebrate. Baptism – awareness – conscious of living of Gospel. Reborn – catechised – parish cells – unpacking word – faith conversations – mission.
11. Priests and people meet together to reflect on the coming Sunday's readings early in the week before Mass and the sharing personal responses/reactions to the readings form part of the basis of the homily. Prayers of the faithful are composed by the reflection group and are specific to the particular faith community. We leave Sunday Mass challenged to see how we can live out our faith in our communities and find opportunities to do so. Try to _____ a Gospel reflection group with local secondary schools to see how they interpret the Gospel and its relevance to their lives. Have ministers of welcome and hospitality at weekend Masses i.e. ushers greeting people at the door and people preparing tea/coffee after a designated Mass each weekend.
12. Ministry of welcome in each parish. More welcoming – have a 'welcome' team at each Mass. Establish prayer groups to reflect on Sunday's readings. Youth gatherings. Family Masses. Invite families to experience a specially prepared Mass with music and singing. Education – Sunday _____ on the different parts of the Mass. Establish Alpha Youth in parish settings.

Crosshaven

1. Celebrant meet and greet prior to Mass. Young person(s) dress the altar. Testament Readings well spoken/feeling. Relevant (short) sermon/topical. Audible prayers (O.F.) spoken more slowly. Music and singing. Chat with celebrant after Mass. More time given to silent prayer after receiving. Angelus. Charitable works (Meals on Wheels). Saying 'thank God' in all our greetings. Smile – entering and exiting. Admire clothes/hair etc. Asks what hobbies?
2. Singing. Praising the Lord. For 6 o'clock Mass on Saturday would love the Angelus said. Once a month have a youth Mass. Organised by the youth themselves. Their own musicians and singers.
3. Parishioners to reflect on Eucharist for a short while before Mass and also after Mass. Priests to give homily on readings rather than some unrelated subject. Involve our younger people to partake in church music – so many talented musicians and singers out there.
4. Quiet time – begin to wind down – sometime before Mass. Collect our thoughts. Be inclusive. Listen. Supporting. Be present. Include music. Be inclusive – many have a part to play, duty to perform, way to help.
5. To communicate with others in a joyful manner especially being able to listen and see can I share faith by helping whoever needs help. To have a choir for younger

people during Sunday Mass, maybe communicate through the schools. Through sharing the Gospel with a study group, sharing the lives of the saints with people.

Harbour Parishes

1. Listen to what's going on and learn from it and spread what's going on.
2. Preparation that enables familiarity with the 'theme' behind the Word of God. The connection and communion that can enrich us in mind, heart, body and spirit. create time for moments of silence. Gestures of reverence. Not to overdo the preaching element/ teaching element. To create moments of reconnection, challenge, peace and reminding us of the grace of God is more than anyone present. Invite ministry at all levels of service as regards Word, Music, Collector, perhaps ushers _____ welcome at the door. The offering gives light, hope and gifts to carry with us to our life situations presently during the day, the week. Not a place to condemn, give out, know what realities are outside the place of worship. Remind ourselves of being followers and companions of Christ.
3. As a priest it is always a challenge to connect the Eucharist to people's lives but the first starting point is people gather as a community at Mass. We missed this dreadfully during the Covid lockdown. People who now come to Mass want to be there. It's trying to connect with them and that God's story of love can connect with their story and give them hope and meaning. It's a challenge, but it's the reason we gather to find meaning and hope in our lives. Some of the readings and prayers are in a language that doesn't connect with people today. Can we use simple plain words for our prayers? Can we simplify the language we use? Can some written and simple explanations of the readings be shared? Can we get more participation with choirs and singing in church where there is none already?
4. I think confession be heard $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to $\frac{3}{4}$ hour before the Eucharist so that through the Holy Spirit the parishioner is set free – also. To admonish the reading before it is read! To enable the people to see themselves in the reading and to come to understand the love of Christ. They will come to understand the deep meaning of the readings and enter into the Consecration of the Body & Blood.
5. I would say if the priests would mingle more with the parishioners (young and old). It would make them feel more welcome and included in the Mass.
6. Getting involved in reading the liturgy at the Sunday Mass. Reading the reading to get full meaning of it and what it is saying to us. Praying together as a family to listen to God's word in the readings of the Mass. Listening to the prayer of the faithful.
7. Welcoming the people as they come in. if the priests could stay at a door as people leave the church. Have volunteers to be involved at preparing for special ceremonies. Children involved in prayers of the faithful. Children taken to another room for colouring or story on the liturgy of the Sunday's. Having a choir if at all possible. On certain times having tea/coffee after Mass – so that people can meet

one another. A parish assembly to support the priest and ease the load of preparations for Easter/Christmas etc. On certain Sunday's – could a lay person give homily. Working with the schools to get children interested.

8. It may be a good idea if the Mass Reading for the following Sunday were left in the Church and people could take them home and prayerfully reflect and when they come back they are more aware of what is going on. Set up a group who may meet and discuss the readings. The way we live our faith is by the actions of our daily life. Encouragement, listening to people – be joyful and support each other. Life isn't all about praying. Maybe we can do something outside of the church (building) in order to get young people to come and share what they see or don't see, and let them know that we value who and what they are.

Tracton Abbey

1. Acknowledge that priests are actively _____. Homilies can be very thought provoking and relevant to day to day. People/parishioners have to be _____ for their _____ as well as _____ for priests. Sunday Mass – encourage different age groups to be involved – readers, choir, gifts. Teaching _____ - lay people – schools – should be thinking of other ways to give young people guidance and knowledge of faith _____ parents e.g. first Eucharist children plus attend Mass and have it explained 1 | 2 | 3 times before 1st Communion. God's Word publications. Acknowledge priests are actively _____, welcome, _____ thank them for coming, suggestion make people feel welcome – children inviting if they haven't made Communion. _____ a welcome group at doors of church _____ areas e.g. _____ Ministry of welcome. Prayer group to reflect on Sunday readings. _____ family Masses, youth Masses. _____ homilies a _____ Eucharist – what is Sunday _____ Enable Alpha Youth as way of attracting youth/young people. _____ of parents.
2. In our churches our priests are always very welcoming on entering the church grounds and at the beginning of Mass. After Mass meeting and chatting to people in the church grounds, i.e. Minane Bridge and Nohoval. By the way in which all aspects of the Mass are carried out with such respect and solemnity. The welcome they give to come to Holy Communion and the blessing given to babies and children not reached their first Holy Communion. In a message from the priests at the end of Mass. By our respectful attendance at Mass and the ceremonies. By encouraging them to come involved – readings, collection, youth choir, altar servers.
3. Music – enhances. Including laity as much as possible. Tying up in some ways more with events in the community. Liaising with schools more and if possible involving young people.
4. I think our priests are doing their best – perhaps thank the younger ones for coming along. To attend Mass as often as possible. To be willing to help neighbours in any situation.

5. Have Masses in schools at beginning of school year and invite them to have their own little prayers.

Session 3: Review of Family of Parishes

How has the Family of Parishes supported parish life in your parish?

Carrigaline

1. The clergy rotate for celebrating the Mass and Sacraments. Some Mass times have changed, so there isn't overlap. People are beginning to be more mobile and accepting of change.
2. Has it? I think we've been lucky in that we are the 'base' and haven't really needed it.
3. I haven't noticed too much change except for priests coming from other parishes to say Mass/or having the choir down from another parish. The newsletter is now a Family newsletter so that's a positive step.
4. There are people coming from the other parishes to attend Mass and other services, which is nice to see.
5. There is still a great deal of misunderstanding in the workings, operation and efficiency of service delivery. There is a lack of cohesion and continuity. Lack of proper communication and understanding of the expected output. Priests are overworked and sometimes inefficient. Moderate responsibility and service delivery. Preference in Mass service delivery has become an issue.
6. The way I see the Family of Parishes is that it involves only the priest collaborating together. They manage and do all the work necessary. The only 'uniting event' between the Family of Parishes that I can think of has been the 'Tracton 800' celebration which was beautiful and uniting. Apart from that, I see us all as separate entities (parishes). There is no inter mingling.
7. Doing things together. Training. Bereavement teams, lector, Eucharistic Minister. Courses, Alpha, Sycamore, Lent talks.
8. There is a positive vibe in the parish due to different priests that administer in the parish during the different ceremonies. More people are coming to Mass on a regular basis.
9. As we have 3 priests in Carrigaline it's hard to know what it would be like to not have a priest resident in the parish.

Crosshaven

1. To continue to provide sacraments despite limited numbers.
2. On a few occasions we have had a visiting priest instead of our own Co-PP.
3. Other priests have covered when the resident priest is on leave. The sacristan and admin staff have shared their procedures with us.
4. Sadly, it hasn't.
5. We can share our priest. There is always a priest on call and it gives our priest support. (1) Share priest and getting to know other priests. (2) Support our priest sickness/holidays etc. (3) Get to know other priests in the area.
6. Saying Mass when our priest is on holidays. When priest is away people can go to Mass in a neighbouring parish.

Harbour Parishes

1. Representatives from each parish - get together at certain times for certain courses/events. Not happening at all.
2. They visit and say Mass.
3. People don't really understand what's going on. We need a lot more information. Find a lot of misunderstanding. People are not enjoying the experience. The parish is at a very low place now.
4. Getting involved in the different ministries in the church.
5. It is nice to see priests from other churches come to say Mass in our church.
6. As we have a vigil Mass, it's nice to see people from other parishes attend Mass (time is a factor 6/7).
7. Shared ministry is grateful stop experiences of worship and encounters beyond our own places. The sharing of different gifts, insight, wisdom, challenge. The common newsletter is linking with the idea of a FOP working together. It is opening individual parishes to other priests not resident in their place. There is an appreciation of faith communities serving and being served. Shared duties mean less stress, overloading.

Tracton Abbey

1. We've received enthusiastic support in a friendly and helpful way by all clergy in the Family of Parishes full stop.
2. With a different priest every Sunday each has their own special way of celebrating the Eucharist and welcoming parishioners. We have always had a great relationship with priests for years and years. Great cooperation with the parish office Carrigaline.
3. Parish life in our parish has changed very little. We still have all our Masses and ceremonies. I have been told by several parishioners that they enjoy coming to Mass each Sunday and meeting a different priest.
4. Being part of a Family of Parishes has meant we continued to have priests available to minister in our parish. It has brought a variety of voices that we otherwise would not have had, if it was just a single parish priest, or no priest at all.
5. Apprehension about change was dissipated by work between clergy and pastoral team ensuring parishioners were receptive to change.

No Parish Name Given

1. Priests availability to help assist parishes for funerals, Masses, duty.
2. It has been positive. The process has been slow but it needs to be slow. We're all getting used to the idea. Definitely there is a strong sense of working together as a team.

How is your parish supporting the Family of Parishes?

Carrigaline

1. The parish has invited and makes people feel welcome to participate in Church activities.
2. Our singers/choirs visit other churches at times.
3. Some of our priests say Mass in other parishes. A few of us came together recently from the various parishes to meet with one another before these meetings. Actually, the first time we all met was at Rochestown Park Hotel last year (December I think).
4. As above, but also organising courses that people from all the parishes attend.
5. Looking out for priests who are challenged by the enormity of their work outlined by (a) a building a formidable eucharistic ministers, (b) leveraging on the void by an efficient Parish Committee, (c) meeting regularly to provide needed support.
6. Again, I think it is all left to the priests. I don't know of any lay involvement between all the parishes, and it would be wonderful if there was. The priests can't do it all. The lay people have to be involved more now and that could only strengthen the solidarity between the Family of Parishes.
7. Print newsletter. Central venue for celebration e.g. Reconciliation.
8. By supporting and helping when needs be for each parish.
9. We have 3 priests in Carrigaline one in Passage/Monkstown and one in Crosshaven. From my point of view they seem to work well together and when they rotate the priests in each parish guest to meet the people and get to know and work with them.

Crosshaven

1. Additional people have come forward to help the priests.
2. Attending meetings when invited.
3. A resident priest has covered Masses in other parishes.
4. Some parishioners co celebrate Mass at Carrigaline when Mass is not celebrated in Crosshaven.
5. (1) By welcoming other priests. (2) Knowing more about what's going on in other parishes. (3) Getting to know other parishioners.
6. We do joint newsletter. We show our appreciation to the other parishes for what they do for us.

Harbour Parishes

1. I don't see that we are supporting the Family of Parishes other than the priests.
2. Not grace, still a feeling of them and us. We don't feel we are part of Carrigaline and other churches yes, we feel Carrigaline didn't have to change as much as the rest of us. It will take time.
3. See the priest from the other churches is good but how can we support this. I don't really know.
4. Visiting our schools.
5. No answer.
6. We have a vigil Mass.

7. Understanding the more than us me, the bigger picture. Priests are working together. There are shared events such as Carol services, Penitential Services. An input into FOP newsletter. Great attendance at meetings as people offer their time and gifts.

Tracton Abbey

1. Very active Pastoral Council, although we would welcome new/younger members of the community involvement e.g. Pastoral Council used their initiative and encouragement of _____ (Pat K) to undertake and organise special past events e.g. recent _____ celebration 1224 - 2024, Good Friday - Way of the Cross with C. of Ireland brethren.
2. By participation in events in different churches and this 'gathering' over the past three weeks.
3. Sharing information, ideas etc with our neighbouring parishes.
4. I don't feel like there has been a lot of integration between the parishes yet. The parish choirs visited other parish churches occasionally and I think initiatives like that could be positive.
5. Pastoral Council cooperating with team ensuring a smooth transition.

No Parish Name Given

1. Parish is supporting Family of Parishes by inviting them to be part of programmes such as Sycamore, Alpha.
2. In every way we can. As Carrigaline is the hub or centre point and where we live we work from the centre out.

What have been the challenges for your parish since becoming part of the Family of Parishes?

Carrigaline

1. Some priests are slow to change. They can be territorial. Older people don't like change.
2. Scheduling of priests for Masses seems to have been tough going on the priests, especially having to travel between churches each Sunday.
3. Some challenges I suppose. Fewer priests, more reliance on the laity, who could be busy with their 'day jobs' therefore have limited time and resources and energy to get involved in a meaningful way - except for ad hoc meetings here and there.
4. The clergy are under more pressure to support all the parishes in the Family.
5. Lack of consistency increase as they constantly rotate service delivery.
6. It just seems that the priests are very busy trying to serve us the needs of everyone in all the parishes. Between funerals, of which there are many, weddings, the sacraments for children, the priests are busy. Someone, i.e. the laypeople need to feel that they can work together in a team to encourage the faith and leading of community.
7. No answer.
8. No answer.

9. If there have been challenges I haven't heard of any. I'm sure there are but for me it isn't obvious.

Crosshaven

1. To adapt to changing services to lay people.
2. Getting to know a new priest. New Mass rota.
3. We no longer have daily Mass.
4. Coordination of other parish priests to visit and celebrate Mass. Sharing of choirs.
5. No answer.
6. No challenges for parish. Big challenges for the priests.

Harbour Parishes

1. We don't know the other parishes in the family well enough yet to come together and work as one. These three meetings are good.
2. Trying to get used to it. Change to Mass times. Travelling to get confessions and Mass.
3. I don't know, I am sure they (the priest) are as confused as the rest of us.
4. Encouraging young people to come to Mass and bring their children.
5. I feel the pressure on the priest is very hard. I also wonder why when a priest turns 75 that he has to retire when he is well and able to carry on.
6. Time of Mass.
7. Willingness to adapt, change.

Tracton Abbey

1. Acceptance and realisation that we do not have a resident priest e.g. baptisms, marriages, funerals. Less personal touch with parishioners.
2. We are the only parish in the 'Family' that does not have a resident priest. We also lost our Mass.
3. Mass times have had to be changed to include all the parishes and try to make the times suitable to everyone.
4. We have lost the Saturday evening Mass which was popular with some parishioners. Some parishioners attend Mass in other parishes within and outside the Family of Parishes, which has impacted on the parish income.
5. Reduction in number of Masses. Priests less present.

No Parish Name Given

1. To get to know parishioners from other parishes.
2. Biggest challenge as a priest is a dilution of personal contact with the people or it takes much longer to make connections as we're covering a much larger area.

How can we celebrate sacramental life as a Family of Parishes?

Carrigaline

1. Timetabling of sacraments not to overlap. Invite parishioners to the different churches when sacraments are being celebrated. Advertise the sacraments/activities in all churches.
2. Host a 'baptism' celebration for all baptised each year. Hold a communal Corpus Christi celebration. Hold a communal Mass for all who received the Holy Spirit. Provide buses to transport older people to the main church.
3. Not sure about this one. I'm not involved in any sacraments, except for going to communion. To take pressure off priests, could you merge a couple of schools from the 'Family of Parishes' so that there'd be, for example, one BIG communion Mass instead of 3? (or maybe that's done already, not sure).
4. Mostly by cooperating with each other and understanding each other.
5. Through team work and responsibility to engage, confront and develop strategies. Towards the celebration of sacrament that is inclusive.
6. Carrigaline is a busy parish so many schools come up so it's just busy. I know Novohal, Minane share Holy Communion and confirmations and that only makes sense but Carrigaline is too big a parish to share - not enough physical room I would think.
7. No answer.
8. No answer.
9. No answer.

Crosshaven

1. By more lay people coming forward to provide assistance with church services.
2. On occasion gathered together to celebrate.
3. Each parish wants to maintain their own church and have Mass locally, likewise with the Primary Schools want to stay local. I don't know how the sacraments can be brought together in one church. However the Reconciliation Service at Christmas is well attended by several parishes. I attend daily Mass in Carrigaline when it's not available in Crosshaven.
4. Rotation of priests. Joined adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in churches (one church each week).
5. Maybe to meet up regularly. Organise events?
6. We do with one penitential service for a Family of Parishes at Christmas and Easter.

Harbour Parishes

1. Mix the parishes for the sacraments.
2. By sharing information, times and places.
3. A lot of preparation with the adults and the children - family.
4. Holding a retreat or mission over a period of time i.e. 1 night a week and have someone come and speak.
5. No answer..
6. No answer..

7. Ex. Shared penitential FOP service

Tracton Abbey

1. No answer.
2. By clergy and parishioner involvement on a much greater scale. Giving laity more responsibility.
3. We are very lucky to be a member of the Family of Parishes. There is a common thread among all of us and that's important, we all have the same goal.
4. Maybe more integration of the sacraments between parishes. Joint baptisms for parents from different parishes get to know each other.
5. Working to ensure all feel welcome despite change and _____.

No Parish Name Given

1. Celebrate Sacramento life in Family of Parishes by sharing our resources also gathering Families of Parishes for reconciliation services etc.
2. By making the sacraments more meaningful, more simpler and use language that connects with people and that they understand. The more participants in any sacrament, the more meaningful it will be.

As a Family of Parishes how do we encourage younger people to participate in the faith community?

Carrigaline

1. Run courses to attract them. Form music group and encourage them to use their talents. Youth Mass maybe once a month. Invite speakers into schools and speak about faith in an interesting and fun way.
2. Have 'family/youth Masses' each week with some communal gathering each month/term to keep them engaged and interested.
3. Tough one. Faith comes from families. Not all parents practice. Could the 'Family' afford to employ a part-time paid youth-faith leader to foster interest in initiatives that would interest young people e.g. environment, social justice, care of elderly and vulnerable.
4. The schools are where the younger people learn and they should play a greater continuing part in encouraging them. Parents also need to be 'upskilled' to enable them to play their part.
5. A special programme must be developed to target the youths. Social media - that meets and appeals to them as they are. Evangelisation with a focus on youth involvement. Develop incentives that target their needs and distract them from their current position. Support mission with a focus - on their needs. Import or engage motivational speakers with a purpose to win them over - using youths to target youths. Organised concerts that focus on youths - must be free and attractive.
6. There should be a lay team working on this. Fr. James is fantastic with the youth but he can't do it all.
7. We don't! As a parish we do, but as a Family of Parishes???
8. No answer.

9. Children's Mass, altar boys/ girls, youth groups, Mass.

Crosshaven

1. Through music and singing.
2. Open invitation. Invite often. Have a choir.
3. The Bishop has been working hard to connect with young people. Maybe some 'youth focused' events could be held in Carrigaline as the most central hub for our Family of Parishes.
4. Monthly school Mass. Chat about the actual church. We are St Bridgid's - do children know her (not the current trend of celebrating the pre-Christian idea).
5. (1) Where possible youth Mass. (2) Visiting schools and talking to young people.
6. End of term Masses. By asking them to help.

Harbour Parishes

1. Youth Masses.
2. We don't! It is very important to get the young into church, but how do we do that?
3. By the example of priests and people who are fully alive and really believe in living up to it, with the youth see - o there must be something in that - let's try it.
4. By participating in doing the readings at Sunday Mass, especially young teenagers.
5. I would like to see the priests and some of the local people go into the schools and have a talk with the children.
6. By the priests or catechists calling to the school and communicating with the children (students) and teacher - religion class.
7. Connecting with schools.

Tracton Abbey

1. Difficult to encourage younger people age profile of congregation attending is disproportionate - depending on schools to promote church - is there a family commitment.
2. Having Masses monthly. Family Mass is like what is happening now in preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
3. First of all that's not easy. Sports and training goes ahead on Sunday mornings, something that was unheard of a few years ago. Younger people will be in attendance for Communions, Confirmations, Baptisms etc youth Masses may work.
4. I think we have to continue to teach and educate younger people about Jesus. The gospel is a great way to show people how they can live a fulfilling life.
5. More family Masses, social occasions, music.

No Parish Name Given

1. Yes. Do this in memory, family Masses, confirmation Masses.
2. Personal invitation goes a long way. In Carrigaline and Tracton we do the monthly Do This In Memory Masses and for the last two years the monthly Confirmation Masses. These provide valuable connections with young people as they move into secondary school.

In our Family of Parishes how can our ministries (e.g. Word, Eucharist, Baptism teams, funeral teams, altar servers, RCIA, Alpha etc) be further supported?

Carrigaline

1. Upskill and retrain.
2. Acknowledgement of their continuous work. Sharing appreciation.
3. Pay someone to coordinate the workload, if possible. It's not fair to rely on laity to do this, who may not have skills or time. This would be better organised if it was a paid role, I think, but I understand pressure in resources too.
4. There appears to be a reluctance among the faithful to engage in any other church activity other than Mass attendance on Sunday. The mindset needs to be altered.
5. Build a team that recruit, motivate and encourage participation with conviction.
6. Perhaps with meetings every quarter to share their experiences or learn new paths?
7. Joining together for training, retreats.
8. To be considerate and kind to them and helping them in their ministry.
9. Be encouraging people all the time to get involved. Don't wait until people drop out of these groups to start looking around. Mothers and fathers get involved in Do this in Memory. These are the people who should be encouraged to carry on after the year.

Crosshaven

1. By parishes with existing teams giving guidance to those who have not yet set up teams.
2. (1) More parishioners avail of the ministries / (2) of the possibility of being part of one of the teams.
3. The teams could attend training courses together and maybe meet quarterly to share successes/failures in their parishes.
4. Engage and empower females.
5. No answer..
6. By supporting the priest, the ministers will be encouraged that they're making a difference and ensuring the churches are open and operating - knowing you were making a difference is very encouraging.

Harbour Parishes

1. In our Family of Parishes we would hope to have people from all parishes making up the funeral teams, altar servers etc.
2. By supporting them and encouraging them and welcoming them, also acknowledging them for the great work they're doing.
3. We who are administering in the parish need the support of our faith community members but very honest, it's very hard to get people to take on the ministry. A lot of teaching will have to happen.
4. Acknowledging the different ministries by deciding to be involved on some of them. Encouraging new people to be involved.
5. I think they should meet more often to discuss different ideas.

6. Having meetings to discuss among themselves their experiences.
7. Shared reflection nights, resources, talks, liturgy, workshops. Use models that have worked in a particular setting for a parish.

Tracton Abbey

1. No answer.
2. By their weekly involvement.
3. Try to get more people involved.
4. Being involved in the Mass and parish life is a very satisfying and rewarding activity. I don't think we need any further support.
5. Get feedback from teams re difficulties. More access to meetings like this.

No Parish Name Given

1. More training from Mission and Ministry.
2. Any ways in which they can come together, chest, talk, have a cup of tea and receive words of encouragement from a guest speaker that can include prayer, quiet time, reflection time etc.

What do you hope our Family of Parishes will look like in the next five to ten years as we work together in the mission of the Church?

Carrigaline

1. Laity being actively involved.
2. A joyous, welcoming place where both lay men and women be a part of the church. Somewhere that we will still be able to go in difficult times for empathy and compassion as well as in the good times. Where the priest/priests that are still there will be hugely supported by the parish in every way.
3. Hopefully, it will be still there! God is good. Hopefully to the recommendations suggested by the Cork and Ross synodal document can be implemented in some way. More inclusivity for LGBTQ+ community. More focus on care of our earth. Footnote: it would be helpful if the roots of the church's problems could be solved by the Vatican. The church needs to modernise in terms of allowing our priests to marry, if they so wish, and for women priests to be ordained. Unless this issue is addressed, I feel our church will wither away eventually, sadly. Faith will live on but the institutional church could suffer.
4. I hope it will be a place where all the people play their part in making it work. Of necessity, with the projected lack of clergy, it will be the only way for the Family of Parishes to survive.
5. At the moment, the Family of Parishes is a work in progress. Specific attention and modification be made to accommodate the less or excluded parishes. More education on the long term be explained and modified, where failure is identified.
6. I hope the lay people will become more involved and so strengthen the faith by active involvement and events organised to welcome more people. Social events, like a garden party (like Novohal 80s) would be fantastic.

7. 1st time its [mission of the Church] is mentioned. More focused on mission of the church and less on my 'parish'!!!
8. We hope for more vocations to the priesthood. There will be more lay people involved, as well as lay deacons.
9. I hope there will be more lay people to help the priest because in 10 years time priests will be in very short supply.

Crosshaven

1. That each parish will have ministry teams set up to assist the priests.
2. All the churches are still open. Vibrant community.
3. I can see our young people who are on fire with the faith attracting other young people to the church. As older parishioners, we need to support that as much as possible, with parish missions, organising youth pilgrimages to Medjugorje etc.
4. More vibrant, more inclusive, more joyous (probably unrealistic!)
5. I wish for a lot more lay people to participate and to bring the youth of the parish with us.
6. Hopefully there will be more priests. Pray for vocations. That everybody feels welcome in the Church.

Harbour Parishes

1. We have a lot of work to do together to encourage people to work and share in one big family. We are not working as ____.
2. Hoping by then people will have become used to it, and willing to cooperate more with each of the churches and more lay people involved.
3. I would hope that in 10 years time we would have a very strong and lively church where the lay people especially women be very acceptable in all the different ministries - none of this will happen if we are not nourished our faith and let it begin there.
4. To have more younger people to take an active part in the church.
5. No answer..
6. Change is being set up in all ministries i.e. communicating more.
7. Vibrant, independent, spirit filled persons at all levels of parishes and in the FOP. Christ-inspired vision that is faithful to Christian liturgy, worship, traditions.

Tracton Abbey

1. Maintain at least 1 regular Sunday Mass, special _____ Christmas, Easter ceremonies in parish. Less priests so more lay involvement. Maybe amalgamate parishes for sacraments e.g. First Eucharist, Confirmation.
2. That the five priests we currently have will stay healthy to continue their ministry. In the meantime training be given in order to be ready for what could and will happen after 2030.
3. Hopefully we will have enough priests to cope with the changes ahead.
4. I hope we still have people keen on participating in parish life, attending Mass, making the sacraments. I hope we still have active priests in the Family of Parishes. I hope our parish doesn't lose its identity.

5. Laypeople playing a stronger role.

No Parish Name Given

1. Fewer priests. More lay leadership.
2. A much wider network of people working together. There will be fewer Masses and more meaningful prayer services. Lay people will be confidently leading some of those services, that will be meaningful, spiritual and full of hope.

Important Note from a Priest: that the days in Killarney, and its input by priests and facilitators be followed through on.