

Chisholm Pastoral Region

Maitland, Rutherford, East Maitland, Morpeth, Beresfield, Gresford and Dungog Parishes

Regional Assembly Report - Issues Raised

Preamble

This is your *Regional Report*, promised by Bishop Michael Malone at your Regional Assembly. We hope it is of assistance to you, as you continue to engage in the process of responding to the regional issues raised at your Assembly.

A good place to begin may be to recall the aims of the round of Regional Assemblies:

1. To provide an opportunity which invited the participation of a wider cross section of people, particularly of young adults;
2. To engage people with stimulus material that would help them develop their understanding of:
 - the influences which have shaped the Church as we experience it today
 - the culture in which we live
 - the type of Church we are called to be
 - what it means to be involved in the evangelising mission of Jesus and his Church in the 21st century;
 - what is needed to be effective followers of Jesus in today's culture.
3. To provide an opportunity for participants to discuss key issues in the light of this stimulus material.

The following questions, which emerge from Fr. Richard's presentation, are offered to help you continue to explore your Regional issues in the light of his input.

1. What is the heart or essence of this issue?
2. What about this issue is Good News or has the potential to bring Good News?
3. What about this issue contains obstacles or blocks to the Good News, both for the faith community and the society beyond it?
4. Where or how in this issue, is the Spirit calling you into the Paschal Mystery; into the journey from death to new life?
5. What resources do you have to help you respond to this issue in a way that takes you forward into a fuller living of the life of Christ?
6. Amongst the options you are considering as your response to this issue, what would you consider to be -
 - healthy or unhealthy responses (does it blame; does it deny the existing reality)?
 - responses focused on mission or survival?
 - responses emerging from a catholic (both/and) mindset as opposed to an either/or mindset?
 - responses that will take your community of faith forward?
7. Where and how does your response fit with the 15 principles and tasks outlined in Fr. Richard's sheet 'Shaping the Church's Future'?
8. Will your response spark and energise people's life, passion, commitment and hope?

With every Best Wish,
The Diocesan Assembly Standing Committee.

Regional Issues

Shared Issues (Region and Diocese)

Diocesan Issues

Universal Church Issues

1. Regional Pastoral Planning.

Dimensions of this issue included -

- Questions concerning the structural development of the Region.
 - Form one parish?
 - One PPC etc
 - PPT's in each 'parish'/ Mass Centre
 - Parishes need to continue at this point.
 - Questions about how the Region operates as a Region: What can be run on a regional level?
 - Adult education?
 - Lenten activities etc.
 - More community building
 - More combined parish functions.
 - Need a clear description of parish needs.
 - Establishment of positions
 - Regional Pastoral Worker: It is important that things are not left to this person.
 - Use a Parish co-ordinator. Job share?
 - Local Mass Centre Teams
 - Hold regular Regional Assemblies
 - There is an attitude needed for all this:
 - Open to change
 - Willingness to be involved and come to things like this assembly
 - Apathy is an obstacle
 - Limited numbers of people who volunteer is an obstacle
 - Empowerment of lay people
 - commitment
 - Enhance the spirituality of the Region
 - Celebrate Caroline Chisholm Day.
 - Communication
 - Regional newsletter
 - Website
- Needs include:
 - Financial support.
 - Formation and training for lay people
 - Education of parishioners about changes and new positions

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

Diocesan Pastoral Planning could be of support and assistance in some of this if considered appropriate by the region. Contact Paul O'Bryan on 49791151.

2. Ministry - Mission.

Dimensions of this issue included -

- We need facilities that will enable volunteers to make a difference
- How do we empower each other?
- Lay people are empowered now
- Reinforce the ministry of the family.
- How can we be better disciples of Jesus?
- How are we bringing Jesus' message to everyday issues?
- How do we develop a climate of attraction?
- Commitment of time is an issue.
- Concern about what we will do with fewer priests.
- Qualifications need to more accessible and affordable.

- Involve and use priests who have left.

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- Laws about the involvement in ministry of men who have left the priesthood, are the laws of the universal church and can only be changed at that level. This is the context in which we continue to discuss this issue.

3. Church - Community.

Dimensions of this issue included –

- How do we return to the Mystical tradition?
- We are called to be a new, different Church as we plan for the future
- Increase involvement
- More social functions and small group activities e.g. dinner.
- Community building vital. We have good strong community programs and people. Affirm this and build on it.
- Days/ gatherings like this good.
- Every person is responsible to be a role model
- Promotion of Small Church Communities.
- Need a Catholic Christian identity that is inclusive.
- To be a Good News Church we need to 'think outside the square'.
- We are the church, not the structures.
- Church is all of us – not private relationship.

- Need for the official Church to listen e.g. the laity's response to the Third Rite of Reconciliation.

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- Paul O'Bryan is available to give any assistance with the development of NCC/ SCG. 49791151
- The laws limiting the use of the Third Rite of Reconciliation are made at the level of the Universal Church. As a way of moving forward within this reality communities may like to explore the use of Penance Services, models of which are found in the back of the *Rite of Penance*.

4. Faith Formation/ Spirituality.

Dimensions of this issue included -

- How can we offer opportunities for personal conversion in our faith?
- Use of Catholic literature.
- Should focus on supporting families in their day to day experience of family life.
- Informal faith development like CaFE
- How do we create the 'want'?
- RCIA good
- For people to lead *Sunday Celebrations in the Absences of a Priest*
- People need practical support and training to take on roles e.g. 'Once upon a Meeting'.
- Spirituality in the pub
- Funeral Ministry training.

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- Diocesan Support will be available for negotiating the implementation of *Sunday Celebrations in Anticipation of Eucharist* as appropriate to regional needs.

There are multiple resources available throughout the Diocese to support the region in this issue.

- TWEC – contact Sr. Colleen Carney on 49307431
- Beginning Theology programme – contact Christine Cavenagh on 49791186
- Faith Development Commission can be contacted through Dianne Lantry – Commissions Support Officer on 49791156

5. Youth/ young people.

Dimensions of this issue include:

- How can we support our youth to become leaders?
- Need positive role models.

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- The diocese has already placed considerable focus on this issue culminating in the report Vitalink. Referring to it may be of assistance.
- Paul Toohey is employed by the diocese in the Pastoral Planning area of Young Adult Ministry. He can be contacted on 49791153

6. Liturgy

Dimensions of this issue include:

- How do we communicate the centrality of Eucharist?
- More up beat music like today.

7. Media/ Communication

Dimensions of this issue include:

- How can we use the media to promote who we are.