

## Engaging Young People in Seaton Delaval



As the partnerships have been in existence for a year-and-a-half, it may be a good time to see what "we have done and what we have failed to do", as the Act of Sorrow puts it! Our partnership of six parishes runs from Gosforth Park in the south to Blyth & Cowpen in the north, and includes some very different communities. We were lucky in that any potential difficulties have been overcome by a lot of good will, so we were able to set up very quickly the three main committees:

Partnership Development, Finance and Spirituality. The PDG has organized a mass every six months, going round the various churches, and having a social after each one. We also produce a partnership bulletin three times a year, which has been well received. The finance group agreed quickly what each parish should contribute to a central fund. Our spirituality group has been very active, arranging days of recollection, prayer cards and various services throughout the area.

What has proved more difficult has been co-ordinating work with primary and high-school young people. This is due to the geography of the area: the North Gosforth children go to a primary school shared with St Charles' parish in Gosforth, then on to High School in Newcastle. The others go to primary schools in Cramlington or Blyth, then on to high school in Bedlington, None of the high schools is in the partnership. The school staffs have good contacts, but getting the children to meet up, or prepare for sacraments, across the whole partnership has not proved possible. I'm sure that we won't be the only area where this is a problem. All-in-all, we have had a good 18 months together, but we agree that the real test (and benefit) of the system will be when there is a further reduction of the number of priests in the area.

Fr Jim Dunne.