

Partnerships – Why Bother?

A large number of people are spending a lot of time and energy getting our 18 new Partnerships up and running. Partnership Development Groups are being established, Chairs are being elected, plans are being drawn up and meetings are being held... But all of this can be something of an irrelevance if we don't focus on the reason for establishing Partnerships in the first place.

Partnerships exist to help each of us to become better disciples of Jesus in flourishing worshipping communities, actively furthering the Kingdom of God here in Hexham and Newcastle.

As the numbers of both priests and worshippers decrease, taking a 'wider than parish' perspective brings with it many benefits. Communities that share their gifts, talents and resources are better able to flourish and to fulfil the outward-facing mission of the Church. Taking a shared responsibility - with our clergy and lay people working hand in hand - will be an increasingly important feature and 'formation for all' is a very high priority for us.

This is a really exciting time for our Diocese as we present the 'Food for Formation' menu of opportunities now being made available. Partnership Development Groups are encouraged to grasp and promote these opportunities widely across their Partnership. Individuals are being prompted to take full advantage of what is on offer and to offer their own gifts and talents so that their worshipping communities flourish. More details are provided on Pages 2 and 3. Perhaps as you are reading them you might reflect on what you (yes you) are being called to do.

Serving Partnerships

On 13th September the Curia (the people in the various Diocesan Departments) met together to consider 'The Role of the Curia in Serving Partnerships'. The lively discussion was fuelled by inputs from a Partnership Dean (Fr Christopher

Warren, Heavenfield) and a Partnership Chair (Mike Weetman, Escomb) who both addressed the topic, 'What's happened so far in our partnership and what we'd really like from the Curia'.



Curious and Curia!

Participants were encouraged to think about how their individual roles - and the role of the Curia as a whole - might change and develop to serve the new partnership arrangements.

Communications Project gets underway

In the last edition of *Partnership Matters* we highlighted work to help us move to more integrated and coherent communications across the diocese. NE Solutions Ltd, a local IT and consultancy company, is now taking an independent look at what works well and what can be improved.

The focus so far has been on Diocesan Departments but is now shifting to parishes and partnerships. This phase will include meetings with a sample of parishes and Partnership Development Groups in each Episcopal Area. Further information will be gathered through a short online survey which will allow all parishes to contribute.

Our website and social media platforms will provide further updates and anyone interested in receiving notification directly can register their interest by email to webmaster@rcdhn.org.uk.

Developing Discipleship

A Diocesan Approach to Renewing Our Mission and Vision

"I dream of a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times, schedules...can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission orientated, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open to inspire...a constant desire to go forth."



Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*

In response to these words, Catholics across the world are waking up to a renewed sense of our mission. They are asking key questions such as: *'How do we avoid the pitfalls of a maintenance model of Church and become more mission-orientated?'* and *'How do we breathe new life and growth into our communities?'* Embracing these challenging questions we are beginning to see offshoots of inspiration around the globe. Here in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle we are intentionally and strategically embracing Pope Francis' challenges, whole heartedly exploring the possibilities of his dream and inviting the whole diocese to join in.

Renewing our mission involves reclaiming our Discipleship; recognising and reaffirming that we are all learners trying to follow Christ's example in witnessing to God's love in our world. If we can develop ourselves as disciples with a mission we will grow and the Church will be transformed. Every individual in our diocese is being asked if they realise how significant they really are. If we want to see transformation and renewal then it begins with each individual. For us all to move

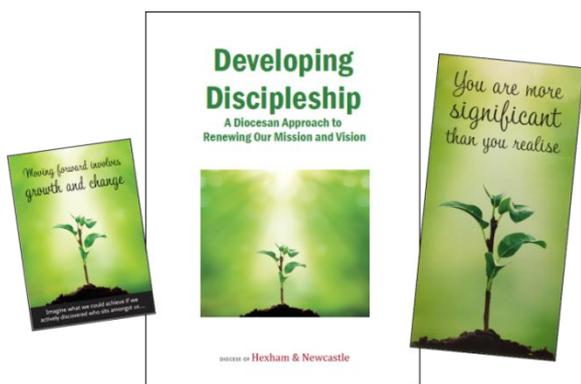
forward we need growth and change and whilst it may be easy to identify the change that is needed in another this invitation is for each one of us to firstly take a look at ourselves.

Research from across the world - from all parts of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations - suggests that no single programme solves the current 'issues' we face as Church. The move instead is about individuals recognising themselves as learners, disciples in our time, committed to a process of growth. It is about waking people up to the richness of life that is on offer when we walk the Christian journey. The 'New Evangelisation' is a term used to describe the need for people inside the Church to be evangelised, to be aware of the faith to which they subscribe. It is claimed that many people in our communities are 'sacramentalised but not evangelised'. They have been through the sacraments but have in some way missed the all-encompassing love of God. It is highly recommended that as we move into partnerships and make plans for the future we do not view the Church as an organisation in need of streamlining and reform. It is the body of Christ here on earth and it is essential that people making plans are rooted in faith and evangelised before they embark on planning for the future and encouraging greater engagement.



As we launch this new direction which we are entitling 'Developing Discipleship', the weekend of the 30th September/1st October is key. This sees the beginning of a personal invitation in the form of a postcard and leaflet for everyone in our diocese. It invites each of us to a renewed focus on our Discipleship and it offers a pathway to get us started.

Every parish will also receive a copy of a larger document entitled 'Developing Discipleship - A Diocesan Approach to Renewing Our Mission and Vision', written to assist those serious about learning more about their faith and those who have a heart for developing our Church. It is a crucial document for our Partnership Development Groups and aims to guide people through questions and initiatives placing Discipleship and Mission firmly at the centre.



The landscape in our Church is changing and the hope here in our diocese is that people step up to the responsibility that is being offered and that we can have a mature, active community of believers who are rooted in faith, discerning in their ministry and trained and supported to live out their calling inside and outside of the Church.

To find out more and to receive a copy of the document 'Developing Discipleship' please contact Amy Cameron at adult.formation@diocesehn.org.uk

Two key events for us in launching Discipleship Development are advertised opposite.

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

'A PASTORAL DAY'
with **BILL HUEBSCH**

THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER

10.30am – 4.00pm
10am refreshments

**Sunderland Marriott Hotel,
Seaburn, Sunderland. SR6 8DB**

In this Pastoral Workshop, Bill will help us to explore Pope Francis' frequent proposals that the Church needs to be open and trained so that we can accompany people from all walks of life on their faith journeys – from the very earliest steps through to major discernment about life choices.

Places are limited and booking is essential.

Lunch donation - £10. Contact the Department for Spirituality spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk 0191 243 3302

**A NEW CERTIFICATE IN PASTORAL MINISTRY
FOR DIOCESES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND**

This exciting opportunity offers world class teaching and resources to meet the needs of our partnerships and would be an ideal platform for those wanting to take more of a lead in their faith community.

There are ten modules including:

- Holiness & Wholeness: How we grow as people of faith**
- Missionary Disciples: The story of the Church in Britain**
- Building parish communities**
- Serving and leading skills and strategies for ministry**

An Information Session will be held on
Wednesday 1st November 2017
5.30 for 6.00 – 7.30 pm
St. Augustine's Parish Centre
Coniscliffe Road
DARLINGTON
DL3 7RG

For more information contact Amy Cameron
adult.formation@diocesehn.org.uk
0191 2433313

News from around the Partnerships

Please send us information about what's going on in your Partnership so that we can share good ideas around the whole of the Diocesan family. In this edition we feature an update provided by the Blackfriars Partnership in Newcastle. Their new logo is shown below.



Nigel Lightfoot, a member of the Partnership Development Group writes:

'The Partnership is made up of 14 parishes in the City of Newcastle, West Newcastle, Gosforth and Ponteland and a Mass centre at Cheeseburn Grange. It includes the University Chaplaincy.

The Partnership Development Group (PDG) has continued to make good progress under the leadership of Fr. Shaun O'Neill. The first step was to hold a workshop to set out the vision for the partnership and to prioritise the partnership initiatives. Six sub groups have been commissioned to take the partnership forward.

There is an ambition is to relieve our priests of much of their business and organisational duties so that they can concentrate on their ordained ministries. This will be achieved by working together and connecting the current parish initiatives to produce a streamlined approach.

The sub groups are:

- Youth
- Lay Leadership
- Administration
- Finance
- Liturgy
- Communication and coordination

These sub groups are small and each is led by a volunteer from one of the parishes. It is planned to widen the parish involvement and become more inclusive as progress is made.

Meetings of the PDG and the subgroups have been scheduled for the year.

Events have included a Day of Prayer, and a Lay Leadership Workshop is planned for October 21st. There will be a Partnership service on Monday 4th December at St Mary's Cathedral.'

Blackfriars Partnership Development Group is happy to share their work and would like to learn from other PDGs.

Please contact: nigel.lightfoot@mac.com

Think Partnership

One or two people have told us recently about some approaches they are taking to get the idea of being part of a Partnership into the thinking of parishioners. For example:

- Always putting the name of the Partnership along with the name of the Parish on bulletins, newsletters and websites. Some are adding a relevant graphic or logo to make this stand out even more.
- Concelebrating a Partnership Mass on a day of significance to the Partnership, opening up the various ministries to all parishes to allow full participation – and concluding with a social event.

What other ideas do *you* have? Please share them

Partnership Matters is produced by the Department for Development and Renewal. To provide contributions or feedback please contact Tony Sacco or Nancy Gash on 0191 243 3304 or e-mail: hope@diocesehn.org.uk