

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
Department of Christian Life and Worship

SPIRITUALITY COMMITTEE - Report to the Department Meeting : April 2010

Membership

Bishop Brian Noble (Chair), Susy Brouard*, Mark Davis, Mgr Kevin McGinnell (Secretary), Martin Foster, Fr David O'Malley sdb, Sr Diane Reynolds ssa. (*Susy Brouard resigned during 2009)
Angela Graham, Kathryn Turner joined the Committee in 2010.

Meetings

Since February 2009 the Committee has met five times since the last report, in St Katherine's Limehouse, in Ushaw College (residential), Shrewsbury. and twice in Eccleston Square.

The Committee has engaged in the following areas of concern and projects :

1. Liturgical Spirituality

This is an ongoing task with the Liturgy Committee and discussions are taking place.

2. Consultation 2009 - June 3 - St Andrew's, Waterloo

The theme was *Taking the Incarnation seriously - creativity within prayer and liturgy*. The main input was given by David O'Malley with assistance from other members of the Committee. There was a good response from dioceses across the countries. The theme was appreciated and the discussion raised many questions and areas of concern. At parish level there is a clear concern about how to deepen spirituality of parishioners who come to Sunday mass at an appropriate level.

The value of networking and keeping in touch was highlighted. From this the Committee took forward the proposal for local meetings within a diocese between local people and some Committee members. The aim is to ensure that spirituality is constantly on the diocesan agenda, linking to leadership within the diocese.

We hope to arrange meetings to cover all the dioceses, individually or in small groups.

The first was held for Arundel and Brighton. This brought different people together who had not previously met. A priest adviser is to be appointed to a network group which is keen to develop spiritual direction.

A Portsmouth meeting has been rearranged after snow intervened. As a diocese it already has a network in place linked to the pastoral areas. (Leeds, Hallam and Hexham and Newcastle have been involved in similar meetings through our residential).

3. Consultation 2010

will be facilitated by James Hanvey, SJ, at Highbury & Islington Baptist Church, on the theme of Sacramental Imagination - *Is Sacramentality the essential hallmark of Catholic spirituality? Distinction between Christian and Catholic spirituality*.

4. Ushaw Residential Meeting

The overnight gave time for a review of the Committee's paper to be presented to the Bishops' Conference, as well as our usual work. Moving the residential each year was done so as to enable the Committee to meet with people engaged in spirituality locally. Seven people locally met the committee for an evening.

There is a Faith Accompanying programme developed in Hexham and Newcastle with ecumenical dimensions. This trains people in spiritual direction, something which is much sought after, and was also felt to be a particular need for seminarians and clergy. The support of the local Ordinary was very helpful, and the programme was part of the diocesan education service.

5. Spirituality Teaching Document

Bishop Brian presented a position paper to the Bishops' Conference in November 2009. The response was :
Spirituality Committee Position Paper

The Bishops' Conference welcomes the Position Paper from the Spirituality Committee and asks that the Committee develop the proposal for a teaching document on the promotion of prayer and spirituality within the Church in England and Wales, highlighting the markers or signs of a 'healthy' spirituality within the Catholic tradition.

In the light of this request the Committee has begun to establish a working party of members and others from across the field to develop the strategy for the writing of such a document. The first meeting will be held in July 2010. The initial remit and parameters of work are to present the non-negotiables of a true Catholic spirituality, referencing its variety of expressions not presenting them in detail, the essential of Catholic spirituality referencing the wider Christian journey. Throughout the process Bishop Brian will keep the bishops informed of the progress of the work. The final document aims to be of use at parish level, with a solid theological underpinning, and an awareness of ecumenical and other dimensions.

6. The Committee exchanges minutes and information with CASE (until 2009) and Churches Together in England Spirituality Co-ordinating Group.

*Kevin McGinnell
April 2010*