

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

SPIRITUALITY COMMITTEE

Report to the Department Meeting : April 2007

Membership

Bishop Brian Noble (Chair), Jenny Bond, Susy Brouard, Mark Davis, Mgr Kevin McGinnell (Secretary), Fr Allen Morris, Fr David O Malley sdb, Sr Diane Reynolds ssa. (Fr Allen Morris left the Committee when he ceased to be Department Secretary in November 2006.)

Meetings

Since the last report (November 2005) the Committee had one further meeting in 2005, met four times in 2006, and once in 2007. One meeting was residential at St Andrew's, Edenbridge. Other meetings were held in London, Shrewsbury, Bolton and Milton Keynes.

Working of the Committee

The Committee undertook a serious review of its purpose and activities in 2006. It was agreed that the Committee is not really tasked with production of materials. There is so much generally available etc. Various projects that were in hand have been reviewed. Some have been redirected, some have been overtaken by other issues, and some are still under consideration. It was agreed that our work needs to be directed more clearly to promoting reflection on what is happening in spirituality within the church, and from that dialogue encouraging good practice and mutual support.

Aims and Purpose

The Committee developed a paper on its aims and objectives which is attached, and which has been put into practice and has guided our work.

On The Way to Life

This report formed the basis of a discussion for a residential meeting in 2006. The dichotomy identified by the report between spirituality and religion in today's world is at the basis of the Committee's agenda. The work of the authors was very useful for members to move further in our own discussions and needs to be seen as an continuing reference point.

Consultation with those working with spirituality in dioceses and other organisations -

In February 2006 40+ delegates came from all the dioceses, sent by their bishops, for a consultation day. It was appreciated by delegates as giving a forum for the first time of its kind. The specific area of discussion was how we address the interface of the general view of spirituality with our Catholic cultural identity. There was valuable exchange of views and of current practice. There is a need for us to be able to critique what is seen as "spirituality" within the widest senses by trying to identify what is essential to Christian Catholic spirituality. This will be helped by making the wisdom of our rich tradition more widely available. Delegates welcomed the initiative and sought further meetings nationally. Some also felt it would be good to organise similar events within a diocese or region

In March 2007 a second consultation was held. Again it was considered to be very worthwhile, although not all dioceses were represented as before. At present a detailed report is being prepared of that meeting. In brief the theme explored was "Contemporary Catholicism - Religion versus Spirituality." There was a useful discussion about the place of spirituality in our church at the moment, and valuable exchange about the great variety of initiatives being undertaken across the dioceses. Spirituality was seen within a theological model of the pilgrim church, and how spirituality is part of the Christian journey was explored. This has specific application to spirituality and liturgical formation as well as so many other areas of Christian life. The delegates were enthusiastic for continuing these consultations and other dialogue.

The Committee exchanges minutes and information with CASE and Churches Together in England Spirituality Co-ordinating Group.

*Kevin McGinnell
April 2007*

CBCEW SPIRITUALITY COMMITTEE 2006

At the heart of Christian Catholic Spirituality is the lived experience of the Paschal Mystery, the death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ, celebrated in the liturgy of the Church

AIMS

1. To assist the Bishops and CBCEW in the promotion and provision of Spirituality
2. To be an informed reference point for the development of spirituality in the Catholic Church of E&W

OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage each Ordinary to exercise his responsibility for spirituality in the local church rooted in the daily life of parish and other communities
2. To inform the bishops of current issues in spirituality
3. To encourage networking between those involved in spirituality
4. To identify and disseminate good practice
5. To celebrate the rich diversity of Catholic spiritual tradition
6. To be attentive to the development of spirituality in contemporary society

MEANS

1. To set up a network of diocesan spirituality representatives and channel their issues to the Bishops
To share recent relevant experience and to keep abreast current events
To highlight for the local Church any new developments in spirituality in the wider church
2. To highlight the spirituality of daily life as lived by the people of his diocese
To name and enable a person/people in each diocese to be the contact point for spirituality in a diocese and to gather an overview of the areas of spirituality for that diocese
To communicate the response and views of the Bishops to those involved in the work generally
3. To encourage appropriate means of communication for those involved in spirituality such as our national consultation, regional meetings, diocesan gatherings etc.
To provide information through such means as email/website of those involved in the work and forthcoming events.
4. To encourage Catholic and other media to cover spirituality issues
To identify, gather and communicate examples of good practice
To involve others who are willing and skilled in promoting this work
To annually communicate this work to a wider audience
To begin each meeting by reviewing issues etc that members feel important to share
5. To initiate a conversation with the religious orders to see how together we can widen the awareness of their spiritual traditions and gifts
To speak with COR and Association of Contemplative Communities to suggest an opportunity be established for religious orders to share their charism and modes of sharing, initially with the Committee
To explore the other areas of the Church developing particular spiritualities
To ensure that the ecumenical dimension of spirituality is integral to our work
6. To maintain contact with other groups responsible for Christian spirituality
To be aware of spiritual developments in other faiths
To inform one another of current research in spirituality as understood in contemporary society.