



judgmental, excluding and rejecting,” said Fr Slingo. Handing on the faith within the family was expressed as another massive challenge.

Assembly members noted the many opportunities that exist in the church to be good news for one another, particularly the key life moments when people approach the church to arrange baptisms, weddings or funerals. “Are we welcoming or do we turn people away? The sacraments are big opportunities for the Church” Questions were asked about how the church helps those that already belong: “Do we help them to grow into maturity?” One participant noted that even though the local response to Listening 2004 had exceeded both expectations and previous experience, there were still many families who had not taken part. Yet another suggested that Catholics were sometimes too busy lamenting the loss of a so-called golden age to see the ‘gold’ in this age: “Every age has its problems. But in continually celebrating what is good, we can support our people.”

In his closing remarks Archbishop Kelly acknowledged that he had initially been hesitant about the Listening 2004 process, but that this “unexpected gift” had provided the diocese with “much food for thought and challenge for action.” With existing diocesan structures under review, the feedback from Listening 2004 should be seen as something providential, from God, which needed to be listened to. In seeking a way to approach and resolve the many issues raised during the day the Archbishop returned to an ancient understanding of the family as church: “There’s a phrase which we’ve had around for a long time and that is domestic church. I think there is something very, very valuable here and it may lead us to understand one part of our diocesan life in a new way. We can affirm lots of things we do with new vitality and this will help us.” In thanking Margaret Rogers and Fr Tony Slingo Archbishop Kelly acknowledged that there had been a lot of anxiety around both the process and the organisation of the day. “But” he said, “it’s been tremendous. Thank you very, very much indeed.”