

PPC Discussion Document 1¹

Enhancing the experience of Saturday Evening / Sunday Morning Mass

Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- What are the physical conditions of the car park, toilets, sacristy, seating, heating system and sound quality?
- What happens to create a sense of welcome at Sunday liturgy?
- What impression does the singing and music create?

Step 2: Take time to reflect

The weekend experience is the number one opportunity for people in the community to connect with church. And almost everyone who actually does come in contact with the parish does so on the weekend. In that brief time, they will decide if it's worth it to come back or not. If the experience is boring and bad, then they won't.

Saint Pope John Paul II very simply taught that the Eucharist builds the church². The Church is formed and grows through the Eucharist, and mature Catholics understand what they are giving and what they are given in the Eucharist ... In it, they are nourished and grow as disciples.

"The Eucharist is 'the sum and summary of our faith,'" says Pope Benedict XVI.

The Church's faith is essentially a Eucharistic faith, and it is especially nourished at the table of the Eucharist ... For this reason, the Sacrament of the Altar is always at the heart of the church's life: "thanks to the Eucharist, the Church is reborn ever anew!" The more lively the Eucharistic faith for the People of God, the deeper is its sharing in ecclesial life in the steadfast commitment of the mission entrusted by Christ to his disciples³.

But let's be honest. Many of the people coming to church these days do not understand the Eucharist and are simply not engaged in it.

¹ This discussion document has been developed by The Pastoral Renewal Team of the Kerry Diocese and is shared with the Parish Pastoral Councils of the Elphin Diocese with permission.

² Pope John Paul II "The Lord's Day" *Dies Domini*: Vatican: the Holy See, July 5th 1998).

³ Pope Benedict XVI "The Sacrament of Charity" *Sacramentum Caritatis* (Vatican: The Holy See, February 22nd 2007).

The weekend experience should be a form of transportation, taking the participant on an emotional, intellectual, and ultimately spiritual journey to the higher things of God⁴.

Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the reality of the experience of people coming to the Weekend Liturgy in our parish and taken time to reflect on what Michael White and Tom Corcoran say about the meaning and the experience of people, explore the various possibilities of how our parish could enhance people's experience physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to enhance the experience of Saturday Evening / Sunday Morning Mass.
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- Did the action achieve its purpose?
- What was not effective?
- Is there a follow-up action needed?

⁴ Taken from: Fr. Michael White & Tom Corcoran *Rebuilt: the story of a Catholic parish*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN, 2013.