

# PPC Discussion Document 7<sup>1</sup>

---

## Identify specific occasions to extend welcome and build community for parishioners

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- In what ways are we, as a faith community, good at creating a sense of welcome and building community?
- In what ways do we, as a faith community, fail at building community?

### Step 2: Take time to hear God's perspective. Read the following and take time to reflect on it.

The first outstanding element in how people see their parish today has to do with welcome. Parishioners want their parishes to be places of hospitality, where people feel welcomed and appreciated, where people feel they belong. Many, as we know, feel excluded for one reason or another. They feel themselves to be on the outside looking in. Those involved in parish renewal want, rather, that all God's people in the parish would feel included, without pressure. They desire that people would feel about the parish something of what they feel about home, namely, that it is theirs and that they are welcome always. They want a parish where people experience toleration and acceptance. They want a parish where difference is celebrated, just as St. Paul gave us the image of the human body, all of whose members are appreciated (1Cor 12).

Parishes put this vision into action in a variety of ways, such as a ministry of hospitality at the Sunday Eucharist, or a welcoming team to visit new parishioners, or initiatives to reach out to those who feel alienated or have been hurt by the Church. People will not come to have their thirst quenched without being invited. The word must go out in the parish that all are welcome.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Donal Harrington, *Parish Renewal Vol I*, pps 61-2

**Step 3: Explore various ways of responding**

Having looked at the reality in our parish and taken time to reflect on Donal Harrington's description of parish, explore the various ways in which our parish could become more welcoming and create a better sense of community?

**Step 4: Identify specific actions**

- Following the discussion and reflection, identify actions in which our parish could become more welcoming and create a better sense of community?
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is required?

**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?