

PPC Discussion Document 8¹

Foster initiatives to support the faith and spiritual development of adults in our parish

Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- In what ways is our parish good at supporting the faith development of adults?
- In what ways do we fail at supporting the faith development of adults?

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

Today a good way of speaking about adult faith or mature faith is to see it as an integration of faith and living. Paul VI said that the 'split between the gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time.' Gospel and culture; faith and life; the holy and the ordinary - in recent times these have become strangers to one another. The split affects each one of us. The challenge to the parish is to help re-introduce them again as familiar friends.

The basic needs of adult faith are personal and experiential. People want help with their spiritual search. They want to be able to reflect on their life experience in the light of faith. They want faith to throw light on their daily living.

When faith and life connect, people take ownership of their own faith and their own faith journey. This means that they can take ownership of and responsibility for their own baptism and confirmation, sacraments which so often appear to be no more than dim and distant memories. Ownership reflects what has been called the shift from 'the experience of authority' to the 'authority of experience'. The culture of being told what to think and do has yielded to a culture where we learn to explore our own experience and trust in our own inner wisdom. But it can be a painful journey; some do not wish to begin; others do not know it is possible.²

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 Donal Harrington, *Parish Renewal Vol 1*, pps 137-8

Step 3: Explore various ways of responding

Having looked at the reality in our parish and taken time to reflect on what Donal Harrington says about adult faith development, explore the various possibilities of how our parish could support the faith development of adults.

Step 4: Identify specific actions.

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to support the faith development of adults.
- 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?