



ZOOM MEETING HELD ON 16th SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7:30PM

CHAPTER 2 - Vision. Anatomy of Decline - Nuala Bambury

CHAPTER 3 - Vision. A Case for Hope - Kitty Hooey

Contributions

Group 1

It was agreed Chapter 2 was 'depressing' but Chapter 3 was more uplifting.

We asked ourselves what stage we felt we were at in the Church at Sacred Heart and in the Church in general.

Perhaps we are at the '*desperation*' stage where we are realising there is a problem and need to change.

Quality is better than quantity and more people are joining the Church than perhaps we realise.

We discussed how there are possibly too many churches and in this country we are spoilt with having a Church, just around the corner in most areas. We should consolidate and have areas where there is a main Church and Parochial house serving smaller satellite churches.

Think about the ministry of Deacons.

Why are there so many priests and nuns in Rome? Why not send them to countries that are battling with Priest shortages.



It is important a change our perspective and find motivation to become missionary in our actions. We have a call to go out and bring people in.

We discussed that it was not easy to go out and talk to strangers, but *evangelism* is different to working within your environment of people you already know. We should start there to build up our confidence.

We have plenty of people in our area and if 1 person asked 5 people, 2 will come.

We discussed how it would be good to have an excuse to invite people, so it was not initially to Mass e.g. maybe a coffee morning / guest speaker.

Finally, we discussed how we are not set up yet in Sacred Heart to welcome new people, we can say hello and be friendly but then what? We need a proper structure to move people through the process of becoming part of our Church and feeling like they belong.

Group 2

Firstly St. Paul struck us as the great example of evangelisation. Straight from his conversion he went out and preached the Gospel; proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God. We need to pray for his boldness. Paul never watered down the Word to embrace the world view; neither should we. Holiness needs to run parallel with Mission for our ministry to be effective.

There was a quote given concerning Bishop Barron when interviewing somebody for the seminary: - "Do you love sinners?"

We must pray for love and compassion. Sometimes we do not have the realisation that we are called to be disciples. Thinking somehow that this is a special ministry. There needs to be a collaborative ministry between lay people and priests as we are all called to preach the Gospel. If you preach the Gospel you will have enemies. A quote from Winston Churchill



says, “The only people without enemies are those who have never stood up for anything.”

We like to have friends; but agreeing with the secular world is a wrong path to head down. The truth should not be compromised. We need to deepen our relationship with Jesus, so that we can be an authentic witness to the world.

The Apostles went out and proclaimed the Good News, confirming the Word by signs and wonders. Even today there are groups of Christians that God is using to heal the sick; the blind to see and the deaf hear; faith often follows healing.

It seems that miracles happen frequently in Africa where faith is strong. In this country we can be too intellectual and nullify faith in healing. Let us pray for our faith to be increased and our love for those who are lost. Sometimes Fr Mallon uses Big words that are sometimes hard to understand. There is power in having a testimony and sharing it.

Group 3

All three identified with the various stages of Decline. Chapter 2 was ‘*depressing*’ but Chapter 3 gave us hope.

All three regard St Paul as a superb role model of how to evangelise. Would be great to have a study session just on St Paul.

We were very struck by the need to be holy and developing a deep faith in the “Case for hope”.

The Bishop of Portsmouth encouraged some 300 church parishioners to spend 15 minutes a day before the Blessed Sacrament. He believed that the Church would have no problems.

BE HOLY - DEEP FAITH - FOLLOW St PAUL



Everyone should spend 15 minutes in front of the altar. Sometimes it is wise to just sit and listen to God instead of crowding out thoughts – God knows what we need. Create time for God.

Although there is such a decline in attendance at other churches – Sacred Heart Church had 330 parishioners 40 years ago and today there are still 330 parishioners. Yearly 10% leave and 10% join.

We do not want our Church to end up as a museum like many other churches.

The church sometimes organises for Priests to come from Africa to help but there would be enough priests and lay people in England to cope.

Church depends too much on the Priest – there is enough lay people that can help. We do not want to be just a Sacramental Church.

The child abuse among priests caused a lot of grief but with prayer and help from the Holy Spirit we can leave all that behind and start afresh.

Group 4

It is difficult to be an apostle and yet we must spread God's Kingdom. We should try to achieve this through those with whom we come into contact. Religion cannot be rammed down someone's throat.

We can share with our contacts what motivates us and what we get from our faith and hopefully motivate them to explore.

We must be joyful and loving people as others will be intrigued to know how we have this joy and love.

We need some sort of growth programme whether the Alpha Course or "Life in the Spirit Course".



We must share with our community and keep them informed.

We could look at having an area for mother and babies - as other churches do.

We might consider a community questionnaire so all can share their thoughts.

We need to be loving – not stiff and formal.

We cannot stand still - we either go forwards or backwards.

Catholics are fortunate as Christ started our faith unlike others who had Henry VIII or people such as John Knox.

We must be positive.

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

What are we doing about welcoming new people? What is the follow up?

Kitty met a new South African couple that she invited to her home and has subsequently been to their home.

We need to have a mailing list to inform parishioners of new developments.

For now, we are sharing *Lectio Divina* and the *Study Group* and we have a new Pastoral Team. Takes time but with help from everyone we will soon have something to share.

The missionaries who go to foreign lands often tell the story about meeting Christ wherever they go. We are all invited to discover the "Seeds of the Spirit" wherever we are.



NEXT MEETING

**30th September
7:30 p.m.
“Beyond the Parish”
Conclusion**

Chapter 4: “Living Jesus’ Model” - pp. 55-74

Anne Colquhoun

Chapter 5: “The Father’s Heart” - pp. 75-96:

Alice De Lima

Chair Person: Charles Pinsent

Secretary: Nuala Bamberg