EMBRACING CHANGE - THREE HORIZONS WITH LAY PEOPLE

Summary of meeting in Saint Matthew's Academy, Saltcoats on 14 September 2014

Lay members of the Deanery, representing all our parishes, met in Saint Matthew's Academy on 14 September 2014. The following pages represent a summary of the themes which were discussed. The information was collected from the feedback from the groups, from short notes made during the sessions and from the discussion at the end of the session.

There are three sections:

1 What are our concerns about the Church as we see it today?
2 What are our hopes for the future – can we see "seeds" of the future in the way we do things now?
3 What can we do now to lead us to where we want to be?

Much of this needs to be developed and we still have work to do.

What are the concerns with the current paradigm of Church?   Horizon 1

Nine themes emerged that are a concern with the current paradigm:
1 Engagement   2 Structures/Model of Priesthood   3 Spirituality   4 Laity   5 Young People
6 Education   7 Liturgy   8 Outreach/Evangelisation   9 Leadership

Engagement	Structures/Model of Priesthood	Spirituality
• Lack of generation 20 to 50 attending Church therefore we lose their families also • Lack of engagement with the poorest people in society • Volunteers willing to assist - an untapped resource • Church events other than Mass	• Clerical autocracy which gives little value to hopes and aspirations of the laity • No coherent plan for change • Current situation for Priests is unsustainable: give more ownership to lay people in parishes • A team running every Parish and even where there is no Priest. Priest will come to say Mass and cover several parishes. • No small Christian communities • The whole model of Church • The hierarchical structure of the Church - too much parenting. • A structure with a single Priest at the centre of each Parish • Expectations v reality (Priests) • Cost in terms of health/welfare/survival of individual Priests • Priests are often unsupported	• (We are not a) Joyful Church full of love and energy • A Church that is about rules rather than about a person's relationship with God • Diminishing pool of spiritual leaders, for example, Priests

Laity	Young People	Education
• Lay people not involved enough • Congregations in decline - physical numbers of parishioners • Lay people should be responsible for running Parish - leaving Priest free for Mass and sacraments • Little or no consultation with laity • New organisations within the Church engaging all of the laity • Vatican II fifty years ago - little moved on	• More attraction for youth to ensure they continue engagement after school life • Lack of involvement of youth a major concern • How do we engage young people • The loss of the youth community to the Church • Communication methods out of touch - they use Facebook, social media, internet	• Lack of opportunities for formation/education across Deanery • Ignorance of Catholic faith • Catechesis of ordinary members is inadequate
Liturgy not connecting	**Outreach/Evangelisation**	**Leadership**
• Language unattractive to younger generation • Out of touch – people seeking in other places • Not engaging people or touching their daily lives • Lack of variety in worship	• Preaching to converted – not reaching out to others • No evangelising done within or outside the Church • Struggle to engage people • Painfully slow to discern role of women in the Church	• (What's needed) Much more community based Church in which Priests and laity work very closely together as in the days of the early Church. • Priesthood closed to lay leadership • Number of Priests • There is a lack of leadership in our Church particularly in this Diocese • There is no spokesperson for our Church with any eloquence or clarity dealing with the media • Parish councils not welcoming or representative

What are our aspirations for the Church of the future?   Horizon 3

Eight themes emerged that would describe our aspirational Church:
  1 Leadership   2 Outreach/Evangelisation   3 Education   4 Mature Spirituality   5 Laity
  6 Structures   7 Inclusive Church   8 Communication

Leadership	Outreach/Evangelisation	Education
• Women Priests and married Priests • Laity fully involved in decision making • A Church that is completely transparent - no hidden agendas • Love (stupid love) less legalism • A Church without the Priesthood as we know it but full of spiritual leaders from all walks of society • Leadership that inspires participation and involvement • A redefinition of roles of Priest and laity	• That we won't exist for ourselves but be welcoming outward looking – more concerned with supporting others and evangelisation • A truly caring Church for all the community • Outreach to the whole of society old, young, rich, poor, intelligent, learning disabled, those seen as outcasts: homeless mentally ill, all should be welcome in God's house. • No small Christian communities • The whole model of Church • The hierarchical structure of the Church – too much parenting. • A structure with a single Priest at the centre of each Parish • Expectations v reality (Priests) • Cost in terms of health/welfare/survival of individual Priests • Priests are often unsupported	• Vibrant faith filled community of young, old men and women living the gospel. • Education beyond school - we never stop learning - more continuing adult formation. • Teaching presented in a more attractive manner • That Catholics learn to be more understanding of other people's faiths. • More in-depth education across all ages
Mature Spirituality	**Laity**	**Structures**
• Confident, educated, adult faithful prayerful who have met the risen Christ, who work for an option for the poor and who work for peace • If lay people are given a greater spiritual role there will be an educational package to support this	• A Church where lay people may have more of a say in its running • Recognising involvement of laity • That each is able to express ownership of the common Priesthood • Laity taking up roles fully • Utilising all of the gifts of the people	• A Church which is less hierarchical and focusses on local needs • That the structure is more loose without compromising core values - allowing more people to come to the Church • Wealth distribution from Rome to eradicate poverty

Inclusive Church	Communication	
• A Church where everyone feels welcome and no one feels excluded from it, where everyone has access to it and where everyone is treated as an equal. • A Church full of love and energy • That the Church open out to all people without limit • More openness for those who want communion no matter what the circumstances • More spiritual/worshipful • More Christ loving	• That the language used can be understood by the young people and also the aging population • Modern media methods bridging the gaps	

What are the seeds of Horizon 3 in the present?

There were eleven themes where people can see seeds of Horizon 3 in the present.
  1 Pope Francis   2 Ecumenism   3 Music/Liturgy   4 Prayer and Spirituality
  5 Laity Involvement Improving   6 Church Transparency   7 Church for the Poor
  8 Flexible Development of Ministries   9 Education Programmes   10 Communities of Faith
  11 Evangelisation

Pope Francis	Ecumenism	Music/Liturgy
• Church for the poor • Emphasis is changing globally • The world leaders want to be seen with Pope Francis • Pope is more approachable • The new Pope and the abdication	• Inter faith groups currently in existence	• Children's liturgy
Prayer and Spirituality	**Laity Involvement**	**Church Transparency**
• Our Church won't survive without prayer and discernment • Desire for spirituality	• Changing role of clergy/ laity • Laity involvement improving	• Church is becoming more open - Pope Francis
Church for the Poor	**Flexible Development of Ministry**	**Education**
• Saint Vincent DePaul Society • Food banks, Scottish International Aid Fund (SCIAF), Mary's Meals	• Emergence of some paid posts • Emergence of Deacons • New technology, for example, Parish websites • Younger bishops • Finance teams in most parishes	• Learning to govern ourselves by faith – not rules • Some parishes have good programmes
Communities of Faith	**Evangelisation**	
• Faith-sharing groups • Desire in the room today • Greater acceptance of marginalised groups, for example, gay marriage	• Youth Caritas Awards • Parish groups • Special Religious Education Group (SPRED)	

What new innovations can be developed to lead us from the current paradigm towards the third horizon?

There were fifteen themes of innovations that would help us develop into the Church of our aspirations.
1 Pooling and Unearthing Resources   2 Transparent Decision Making
3 Become a Church of and for the Poor   4 Spirituality   5 Formation for Ministry
6 Enhanced Leadership   7 Better Liturgy   8 Education and Faith Development
9 Communication   10 Finance   11 New Ministries for Laity   12 Evangelisation
13 Engaging new people   14 Campaigning   15 Young people

Resources	Transparent Decision Making	Become a Church for the Poor
• Engage more people from our congregations rather than it always being the same ones • Using the gifts and expertise of the laity more. • More inter-Parish events • Swot analysis of each Parish • Better use of Deacons and lay people • Plan things from a Deanery perspective • Pool resources to create paid posts for Deanery • Centralise resources and share good practice	• Church authorities should speed up their decision making • Lay representation on Diocesan decision making bodies • Diocesan plan - what Priest does what laity does • Changing decision making process within parishes and at Diocesan level. • Publication of minutes of Parish groups and or committees to ensure congregation feel included in decision making	• Outreach to the poor and vulnerable in society - visiting nursing homes, alcoholics, drug abuse, homeless
Spirituality	**Formation for Ministry**	**Leadership**
• Prayer groups/ services led by lay people • Actively encourage spirituality and prayer • Regular retreats across Deanery • Educational spiritual programmes more readily available • Increase in faith sharing and study groups to increase the confidence of those called to evangelise. • Develop family spirituality resources	• Much shorter and more effective training for Priests with relevance for twenty-first century - women Priests • Changing the programme of education for Priests making it less lengthy/rigid might attract more young people • More Diocesan/Deanery wide communication and invitation to share ideas and resources especially Religious Education spiritual exercises • A coordinated training programme for men and women to assist/deputise for Priests in North Ayrshire	• Our model of Church needs to move from maintenance to mission • Greater equality between Priests and laity

Better Liturgy	Education and Faith Development	Communication
• At Diocesan level make an attempt to provide good music in each Parish • Enhance the liturgy with good music, varied approaches • Big joint Masses twice a year across the region	• Better understanding of canon law • Teaching and outing into action skills in evangelism • Teaching for a greater understanding of the spiritual battle that is going on around us. • Adult education to be ongoing with a variety of approaches to attract people • Sharing good practice across parishes	• More use of media, new technologies • More education in use of technology to communicate with young. • More communication between parishes • Raise profile in communities
Finance	**New Ministries for Laity**	**Evangelisation**
• Finance lay people to gain knowledge of their faith and to be used in evangelisation • Save Parish funds by using the skills of parishioners • Scrutinise the financial help available to Priests and Deacons	• Laity leading funeral services, doing baptisms, weddings. • More involvement of lay people gives more ownership of what's happening	• Evangelisation by way of personal witness • Living faith in everyday situations
Formation for Ministry	**Campaigning**	**Young People**
• Fast track training for certain older people to Priesthood and diaconate	• Campaign for change within the Church re unjust structures and more open transparent leadership and accountability	• Caritas Program for young adults involving them in Church and community. • Plan to engage young people • Have Three Horizons process with young people • Engage with communication methods they use – Facebook and so on