

**2nd Meeting of the
Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council
6 March 2011**

On March 6th the Diocesan Pastoral Council had its second meeting in Dromantine with over sixty members attending. These included Cardinal Sean Brady, Bishop Gerard Clifford, Dean Colm Curry, Chairs of the Diocesan Commissions, representatives from religious life and from the Senate of Priests, Pastoral Area representatives, representatives from the new ecclesial movements and active diocesan organisations. The proceedings were chaired excellently by Mr. Patrick Logue who will continue to act in this capacity until a Chair is elected in May 2011.

The day was a vibrant mix of spiritual formation, thoughtful prayer and serious business.

Prayer was led by Dean Colm Curry, with the help of Mr. Malachi Cush and Mr. Plunket Mc Gartland who provided a beautiful music backdrop to the liturgy. Sr. Briege O'Hare OSC gave a magnificent and provocative talk on "The Resurrected Self" which was most apt for the beginning of Lent as it focused on the "logismoi", the hidden sinful thoughts within us that can delude us into living out of the ego and a false sense of self, rather than on becoming the beautiful self that God intends us to be.

- Seven of the eight commissions reported on their work and their membership. After some teething difficulties and recruitment of new members the various commissions are settling down to engage with the remits that have been entrusted to them. There is a growing awareness of how critical these commissions will be for the success of the Diocesan Aim, "*... to be the Body of Christ with the help of the Holy spirit so that we can live like Jesus in our time and place sharing his compassionate love with all.*"
- There was an opportunity to question the commissions on their work and to suggest areas that they could engage with.
- One thorny issue that arose was the ongoing problem of communication. It was agreed that in the future correspondence will be sent, not only to the Vicars forane, but also to the chairs of the Pastoral Areas to ensure a better distribution of information.
- Some changes to the constitution need to be made but these were deferred to the May meeting.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is a most significant body in the life of the Armagh Diocese. The gathering of the different states of life to discuss and care for the pastoral life of the people is both vibrant and life-giving. As this body takes root it will play an increasingly significant role in the ministry of the local Church. Cardinal Sean Brady in his concluding remarks referred to this and expressed his joy and his deep appreciation of the work that is being undertaken in such a collaborative and collegial manner. He referred to Pope Benedict XVI and his call

for co-responsibility between cleric and lay in their care for the Church. This is being realized through the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will meet again on May 26th at 7.15 in Dromantine Conference Centre.