

## The Workshops:

At the workshops I attended “Praying in bits and pieces of family life” led by Fr. Frankie Murray and “Mouldy cups, smelly socks and hormones” by Mr. Brian McKee. I would have an interest in both these areas as I think that they are both related to each other. Fr. Frankie Murray gave a very inspirational talk on how people pray going from where we pray and how we pray as individuals and that not everyone prays in the same way as we might pray. One woman there had a teenage daughter who she was worried about as her daughter didn’t believe in praying but as Fr. Frankie explained and this very point was highlighted by one of the key notes speakers that each person goes through a variety of praying models in their life. For example as children we are taught basic prayers and build on our prayer database over the years. However young adults in today’s world might pray through acts of charity or kindness or music for example. My parents and grandparents adopt a more formalised mode of praying and keep to the traditional prayers. It is about what is right for each person as an individual and that there are no right or wrong ways to pray. Brian McKee gave an inspiring talk to everyone on how he found ways to inspire young people and to work with young people especially those young people who are troubled most mainly in inner cities of Northern Ireland.

At the workshops on the Saturday – I attended “Praying as a Parish Pastoral Council or Parish Area Resource Team” by Noirin Lynch and then the “Spirituality of the work of Patrick Kavanagh” by Doctor Una Agnew. Noirin Lynch gave an inspirational talk on how Parish Pastoral Council’s and Pastoral Area Resources

Team can easily become distracted when it comes to praying. Noirin give some ideas to the group as to improve our group prayer time:

Have a bookshelf in public church places as a resource to the person who is to lead the prayer for the meeting. The group should pray at the start and the end of the group meeting as well as praying at the middle of the meeting and if the group couldn't find a way around a major problem. One idea is also to have taken home prayers and suggestions. The prayer could be in the style of lectio divina Sunday Gospels etc. We should also have spontaneous prayer sessions to bring petitions and encouraging thanksgiving etc. Songs, silences, symbols and 'Put out into the deep' are ideas. The format should take the form of having a leader or preside with involvement of everyone in the group model of prayer. Scriptures, the Sunday Gospels and books which are Irish user friendly and accessible. Another suggestion was to have a materials box with things like materials and cloths, pebbles, shells, CD and CD player, matches, candles, etc. Individual people in the group should have a materials box and then have a group box to draw on resources. We also received some prayer resources from the prayer and spirituality group. Doctor Una Agnew talked about where Patrick Kavanagh came from and explained how he received his inspiration for his poetry. Out of all the workshops that I attended – the Spirituality of Patrick Kavanagh was the one workshop that I wasn't too sure about as I like reading poetry but have not read any of Patrick Kavanagh's work. This has worked out really well as Patrick Kavanagh was a Monaghan man and I am from Aughnacloy which is geographically very close to Monaghan and Patrick's home place. It has opened my world to a very interesting world of poetry and I have a new interest in poetry that I didn't realise I would be interested in.