



Armagh preparing to renew its Parish Pastoral Council



Theology students socialising with American Visitor



Bishop Clifford honoured for his unstinting service and dedication to the diocese.



Clonoe Parish Pastoral Council working on their mission statement



Bishop Clifford Honoured.

At the annual Priests' Conference in November, Bishop Clifford was caught off guard by the presentation of a significant cheque to him from the priests of the Archdiocese in recognition of his unstinting and dedicated work on behalf of the diocese. There was huge applause from the assembled presbyterate, a warm and fulsome indicator of the esteem and fondness that is felt towards Bishop Gerry.

Fr Kieran McKeone PE, one of the oldest serving priests in the diocese and with whom Bishop Clifford worked in his first curacy, presented the cheque.

Speaking on behalf of the Armagh presbyterate, Dean Colm Curry thanked Bishop Clifford for his trojan work often in the midst of great turmoil within the Irish church.

Bishop Clifford was stunned by the generosity of the award and he thanked all for their support and their care of him during his recent illness.



Members of the newly formed Parish Pastoral Council in Middletown working together.

Middletown have created a new Parish Pastoral Council which will complete its training in the New Year. Some of them are seen above working on an effective mission statement for their council.

There has been significant activity over this year in the formation and renewal of Parish Pastoral Councils.

To date, Eglis, Clonfeacle, Keady, Clogherhead, Carlingford, Middletown, Armagh, Clonoe, and Dungannon have all finished their training and new members are now taking up their roles.

In the coming months training will commence with Loughgall, Cookstown, Cooley and Pomeroy.

Armagh & Clonoe Pastoral Councils

There were large attendances in the Synod Hall, Armagh and in Clonoe at the trainings sessions to renew the respective Parish Pastoral Councils. The training sessions were vibrant with the attendees showing great enthusiasm and optimism for the work that lies ahead. The new councils will be commissioned shortly and will take up office immediately.





Spiritfest & Soil for the Seed in the Pastoral Centre Portadown in 2014

The Spiritfest Team have been planning the next conference after the success of the first two initially in Armagh in 2011 and in Dundalk in 2013. They have chosen the Portadown Pastoral Centre as the venue for 2014 and they are indebted to the welcome and the encouragement offered to them by Fr. Michael O'Dwyer P.P.

The planning team of Fr Declan O'Loughlin, Fr Gerry Campbell, Susan Morgan, Milanda Kelly and Tony Hanna have been working hard to continue the success of the previous gatherings. The committee hopes to make this conference an annual event, one that will inspire and energise the faithful of the diocese. Full details of the speakers and the programme will be announced in the next newsletter.

Portadown Pastoral Centre will also be the venue for the next Soil for the Seed theology programme which will begin next September, 2014. The two year programme has already been held in Cookstown, Dundalk, Drogheda and will conclude in Benburb in May 2014

Called and Gifted, Dromantine Feb. 2014

In February 2014 Sherry Weddell from the St Catherine of Sienna Institute, Colorado will conduct a training programme on the Called and Gifted process.

This is a fascinating process which helps people to identify the gifts that God has given to them and more importantly to offer these gifts for the building of the kingdom.

As we discover more and more the centrality of Baptism, we need to explore how we can call forth the giftedness that is present within our communities.

The Armagh team will be joined by teams from the diocese of Dromore, Down and Connor and a team from the SMA. The hope is that this process will be offered to all parishes in late 2014 once the initial training is completed.



According to Sherry, more than 75,000 Catholics priests, seminarians, religious and lay—have gone through the Called & Gifted discernment process to date, in hundreds of parishes in 105 dioceses on five continents.

ArchBishop Eamon Martin meets with RCIA candidates in Dundalk



At a time when we hear so much about people not attending church or becoming disillusioned with Church the success of the RCIA is truly a good news story.

Currently, there are twelve candidates for baptism next Easter and they will be received into the Church on Holy Saturday night during the Easter vigil.

The RCIA (Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults) is the liturgical and catechetical process designed for adults attracted by Christ and his teaching. It supports them as they seek to respond more deeply and to enter into the Communion of the Church. The Catechumenate, also known simply as RCIA, is offered to those who have never been baptised, as well as to those who have been baptised.

The baptised who are suitably prepared are welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church by the reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

In Dundalk, over the past few years, under the guidance of Joe Purcell, (co-Director of the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Centre) a sizable number of adults have been instructed and initiated into the Catholic faith.



[Quadri, Aaliyah & Al-Manniu Ariyo, participants in the RCIA process 2013-2014 with Archbishop Eamon Martin and Sr Rhoda Curran.](#)

We wish all of you a very happy, holy, and peaceful Christmas. Blessings!

Fr Gerry, Milanda, Tony

*“For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given”*

(Isaiah 9:6-7)