

Emerging Ministry

Working group: a cursive version of the brainstorm in Pezinov, June 2018

The future of the parish?

Locally ordained people?

Our Purpose

Why are we doing this?

Why have a working group on this topic?

What future possibilities are we working towards?

1. Move from individual action to community activism
2. Encourage taking responsibility both local and international
3. Work towards sacraments more closely aligned to gospel message
4. Sacraments designed to be more aligned to culture
5. Empowerment of both the poor and women to bring an end to clericalism

Our Core Team

Hans Bendsdorp, Toni Dubinine, Peter Andronov, Max Stetter, Raul Juarez, Erich Baldauf, Margaret Lee, Jan Zemen, Jean Riordan, Petra Dankova, Pablo Pagano, Ingmar Krug, Patricia Fitzsimons, Deb Rose Milavec.

Stakeholders – Who will benefit?

Everyone. All laity, all communities, because priests will be liberated, women will have their proper role, ecology of the planet better respected – No more driving around hundreds of kilometres to deliver sacraments in the developing world. We cited a European example where a Swiss Abbess has appealed to the Vatican to ordain one of her community of nuns, because of the shortage of priests.

Principles of the group - We are all agents, not mere beneficiaries.

Inclusion, empowerment, building from below, synodality, solidarity, subsidiarity, communio, transparency, accountability.

No more self-referential, inward-looking decisions or choices about the size or scale of church appropriate to each community (i.e. respecting difference.)

Desired outcomes - Tangible

1. Fewer physical structures
2. More people as active agents in church
3. Shared work-load
4. Training opportunities appropriately resourced
5. Hopefully celibate priests released for new spiritual roles, less mundane work for highly-trained spiritual directors, always needed by the community.

Desired outcomes – Intangible

1. Spreading the gospel
2. Change of mentality from liturgical consumer to liturgical celebrant
3. A community ethic that is participatory, learning, responsible and active.
4. A sense of freedom and respect
5. Equality for all
6. Inclusion for all
7. Faith connected to life

The invitation

How do we invite people effectively at different stages in their life and at different stages of community development? How do we share along the way?

Limiting beliefs – what holds us back?

1. The clerical mind-set that infantilises laity
2. The Laity mind-set that colludes in being infantilised
3. Conservative 'dissidents'
4. Fear of church law

5. Greed for power or status
6. Anxiety about the loss of 'certainty'.
7. Ritualism
8. The current definition of Sacrament – especially of Eucharist.

Challenges

1. Prejudice, apathy, inertia.
2. Vested interests in the status quo.
3. Financial complications for priests and parishes, dioceses and individuals.
4. Sentimental attachment to the 'Good Old Days'.

Insights

1. We have to be prepared to see people vote with their feet while the vestiges of the current ministry situation are still around.
2. We have to get started BEFORE the church of today has died.

Unanswered questions

1. How do we engage with young people?
2. How do we deal with the traditionalism of young clerics coming out of seminaries now?
3. Can we bring change to our dying church in time?

We need help with....

1. Training laity in scripture, theology, preaching and CONFIDENCE.
2. Looking for the best possible translations of liturgy in our own language and campaign for this to be achieved.
3. Possible financial complications
4. Start with Bible sharing, rotate leadership whenever possible, building confidence of participants.

Timeline and milestones

How do we measure impact? How do we reflect and integrate learning?

Already in 2018 – some shoots emerging....

1. Helmut Schüller is training his parishioners to dispense the sacrament of the sick.
2. Bishop Lang in Clifton (Bristol, England) has set up training schemes for laity, with help from La Retraite sisters.
3. Liverpool diocese in England has had lay people running funeral ministry for over 10 years.
4. Linz Diocese in Austria is preparing laity for more responsibility.
5. Cardinal Marx has stopped the closure and amalgamation of parishes in his Munich diocese and is training laity.
6. Bishop Kräutler and his pilot schemes in Brazil.

Our next steps

1. All of us to read at least one of Fritz Lobinger's book like 'Leute Priester' or 'Like his Brothers and Sisters', as well as reading one of his training handbooks to be circulated in PDF by Jean.
2. Toni suggests we all read the Didache to learn more about the Early Church. Jean recommends Prof. Thomas O'Loughlin's book about 'The Didache' but the translated ancient text is readily available online.
3. Peter is going to sort out a domain name for the group.
4. Max is our group coordinator.
5. Hans will deal with setting up Zoom conferences for the group, like the one that happened on July 2nd 2018, with a second planned for late August.
6. Remember Holy Disobedience has been going on for years in our Church! Encourage it! Learn from it!