

Parish Reality for Formation – Feed my sheep



Christ's Charge to Peter, Raphael Cartoon, V & A

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

John 21:15-17

Vision statement

We desire to be a parish in which everyone's personal relationship with Jesus Christ is established, confirmed, strengthened and renewed.

We desire to be a people who, choosing Christ anew daily, long to witness more to others while seeing those already in our parish and helping them grow close to Jesus.

We desire to be a parish in which every disciple is a personal witness to the Gospel.

Thinking of our **Parish Reality** enables us to begin to see both what and who we are missing. Given our reality where do we want to expend our energy on formation? Given our parish reality, what is our true formation need? In all this pondering we keep our eyes fixed on the Lord – it helps us look up out of the everydayness of parish life, the joys and the challenges and helps lift our eyes to the Lord – to remind us to listen carefully to the Lord and each other.

We pray together with scripture:

- ◆ Is there anything that strikes you about this passage?
- ◆ Is there anything that you notice about it that you might not have thought about before?
- ◆ What do you think the mandate/invitation to ‘feed my lambs’, ‘Look after my sheep’, ‘feed my sheep’ means? What does this teach us about formation?

Take 5 minutes to reflect on this.

- ◆ What does the Lord want for your parish with regard to formation?
- ◆ How might ‘feeding of lambs’, ‘feeding of sheep’ be lived out in your parish?
- ◆ What experience of formation would you like your parish to experience?

Take 5 minutes to reflect on this.



Our Parish Reality for Formation – getting to grips with the reality of where we are

Statistics:

- Mass Attendance data
- Courses/programmes and people involved in formation (Alpha? Sycamore?...)
- What has changed since Brexit/Covid? Demographic of congregation vs demographic of parish

Audit:

- Finances
- People
- Previously / well established patterns of working
- Spiritual and emotional position of Parish leaders and congregation in general
- Identifying particular needs in the Parish

Three key questions:

1. Are there areas of growth in formation? Are there any events, programmes and resources that are currently being used to help people to deepen their faith?
2. What do you think is missing?
3. If you consider areas of faith formation (e.g. knowledge of the bible, Church history, teaching and morality), which areas do you think that people would most benefit from in deepening their understanding and confidence of faith in?

