

Audit of Pastoral Provision for Young People in the RC Diocese of Hallam

*““We are not calling young people out of their world but helping them to find the God that lives and thrives inside their experience.”
General Directory of Catechesis 1973*

31st July 2005

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The purpose of this audit is to identify and advise an appropriate way forward to ensure the Diocese of Hallam can best meet the needs of its young people.

Summary

This document reports the findings of an audit of youth provision within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hallam, carried out between January 2005 and July 2005. The ensuing advice describes action to ensure that the Diocese of Hallam best meets the needs of its Young People and Young Adults. It is the third and final document to be presented to the Trustees of the Diocese of Hallam regarding the audit of youth provision commissioned in January 2005.

As a result of the major recommendation of the mid term report presented in May 2005, the process of recruitment for the Diocesan Co-ordinator of Ministry to Young People (DCMYP) has begun. In practice the key challenge for the DCMYP will be to ensure that Parishes, Schools, Colleges and Universities are supported, inspired and enabled to realise the mode of Youth Ministry appropriate for their individual situation and circumstance. In reality this means being flexible enough to support, co-ordinate and resource at a reactive level and yet be proactive enough to instigate, initiate and create opportunities where necessary and appropriate. It is within the main body of this final report that the detail behind the commentary and recommendations of the mid term report can be found.

The findings of the audit present no great surprises and, as a generalization, can be said to confirm what many within the Church have been advocating and theorizing about for years. For example, an extract from "The Burden of Youth" report¹ provides an accurate summation of the questionnaire of this audit (completed by 4750 pupils of the seven Catholic High Schools and one Joint Catholic and Church of England School):

"[there is] a need for some sense of belonging or meaning in their lives that will provide stability and support in a fast changing and open ended world. Such support may only be accepted on a voluntary or temporary basis, but nevertheless needs to occupy a strong enough position to avoid being merely 'another option'."

The important difference between this report and those of most of the contemporary theorists of recent years is that these conclusions and recommendations are based directly on the conversations and consultations with young people, young adults and those who provide ministry and service to them, for them and with them. Also, the audit was commissioned to provide advice for action rather than advice as to further research needed

Most of the conversations and consultations took place with people who had an existing and current link with the Diocese for example young people and staff of Catholic Schools, young adults involved in the university chaplaincies; young people and young adults involved in Parish groups.

In general, young people and young adults who have disengaged from the Church and are out of the 'education loop' were simply not interested in discussing ways for them to 'reengage' with the Church as they see no relevance or reason for them to do so.

The overwhelmingly positive response from Clergy, Religious and Lay People during the audit suggests that ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the practical application of the recommendations of the report is essential.

¹ The Henley Institute on behalf of the Salvation Army. 2001

The sections within the main body of the report quote valuable comments, suggestions and observations made by people during the audit. They are taken from individual conversations, listening sessions with focus groups and the responses to the questionnaire and are quoted exactly as said or written

The findings of the audit show that whilst many young people feel distanced from the established Church and formal worship, for many, their faith and belief in God is important to them and does affect the way they live out their lives. The level of participation and engagement plus the quality of suggestions made during the feedback day show an encouraging willingness and want to be part of and to feel part of that which is their baptismal right.

The findings also show that some Priests feel distanced from the interests and motivations of young people, however this does not stop them from wanting to understand, support and encourage wherever possible, albeit for some the preference would be to support and encourage through a third party such as Catechist, Youth Worker or direct funding.

Conversations and research highlight the role of families and parents in the catechesis of children and young people as a growing area of concern. However, many young parents appear eager to re-engage with the Church especially as their offspring approach important sacramental and educational land marks in their lives. The majority of parishes provide adequate provision for parental inclusion in sacramental preparation, however, there appears to be a huge gap between parents who feel very comfortable to incorporate their faith into their everyday lives and those who leave it completely to the schools and children's liturgy session at Sunday Mass. A recommendation of this report is that to redress the balance, more could be made of the resources within Catholic high schools, not least the young people themselves, who one day might have parental responsibilities themselves.

The conversations with Young People, Parish Youth Leaders and Parish Priests identified as a priority, the need to develop effective inter-parish communication networks which will provide support and nourishment whilst enabling parish groups to maintain their desired degree of autonomy. The suggestion was that a secure form of technology would be the most practical solution.

All conversations agreed residential experiences for young people to be of great value. In fact some Priests actually went as far as saying they were essential. The emphasis was on the "getting them away from the everyday" in the sure knowledge that the spiritual aspect will be an inextricable part of the whole experience.

From conversations with Head-teachers, chaplaincy co-ordinators and other interested parties it is evident that a holistic approach to Chaplaincy within our school communities is deemed as vital so that the desired ethos of the school will permeate all areas and aspects of school life. Many positive and constructive initiatives have and are made available through the Diocesan Schools Department and the Director of Schools along with the meeting of Head Teachers have given valuable input and advice to the audit as to how DYMC could support this approach in a way which could have a positive impact on the ministry aspect of the work of all members of the school community.

Listening sessions within University Chaplaincies revealed, among other things, a willingness to contribute to youth ministry in Parishes. The value of peer ministry cannot be underestimated and a recommendation of this report identifies this as a development area of priority.

The diversity of need and expectation across the Diocese eliminates any notion of a 'one size fits all' approach to Youth Ministry. Therefore the key recommendation of the audit is that the face and emphasis of service provision needs to be reordered in order for a flexible and multi-faceted approach to Youth Ministry can seek to engage, support and journey with young people as they endeavour to survive in and make sense of a 'fast changing and open-ended world' thus making a realistic and sincere response to the exhortation of the late Pope John Paul II:

"There is a need for pastoral outreach to young people wherever they are found in schools, universities, the workplace, the countryside, with appropriate adaptation to their particular inclinations."

The findings of this audit present a challenge for all Catholics to ensure that young people and young adults are recognised as an essential and life giving element of the Church and that their needs and contributions are incorporated into and supported by the key pastoral areas of the Diocese whether or not they are regular worshippers in their local Parish Church at this particular time in their lives.

Various pieces of related research conducted in the past five years point out that 'freedom of choice' is the angle used by marketing agencies across the world to 'tempt and pressurize' young people into buying their products or even buying into a particular life style, therefore it cannot come as any surprise that most young people expect to be or even take for granted that they will be 'wooed and cajoled into 'buying into' a product. It is encouraging then to read and hear that 'providing entertainment' is not what is wanted by the young people and certainly not on offer from those who minister to them, both ordained and lay. In this there is unity of agreement, a common ground from which progress can be made and a base on which to build.

Whilst this report has been specifically prepared for the Trustees of the Diocese of Hallam, it is also intended to be an informative, working document of use and reference to the soon to be appointed DCMYP.

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METHODOLOGY

The following methods were used to compile this audit:

1. Conversations with Parish Priests and Parish Administrators of the Hallam Diocese
2. Listening sessions with focus groups of young people in schools and parishes of the Hallam Diocese
3. Listening sessions with members of the University Chaplaincies
4. Conversations with Parish Youth Workers (Volunteers and Paid Workers)
5. Qualitative response questionnaire put into the Catholic High Schools and the Joint Catholic and Church of England High School of the Hallam Diocese.
6. Attendance at meetings of Head Teachers; Deputy Head Teachers; Heads of Religious Education; Chaplaincy Co-ordinators and Religious Education Co-ordinators.
7. Conversations with a cross section of parishioners
8. Conversations with interested parties
9. Observation of the Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes
10. Observation of the McAuley School Mission
11. Conversations with Youth Workers/Ministers, Priests, Religious, Interested Parties outside the Diocese of Hallam
12. Existing published material (see bibliography)

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And finally this work is offered back to the Lord, through whom all things come.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In January 2005 the Diocesan Trustees commissioned and authorised the post of 'Youth Consultant to the Diocesan Trustees' within a time frame of 1st January 2005 to 31st July 2005. Fundamentally the brief was fourfold:

1. To conduct and complete an audit of youth provision across the Diocese in deaneries, parishes, schools, colleges and other settings
2. To meet with, listen to, talk to and discuss with interested parties, all the issues pertaining to the needs of young people in the Church
3. Along with others engaged in this process and in a spirit of prayerfulness, openness, enthusiasm and encouragement, to begin to discern a way forward.
4. To prepare a detailed report for the Diocesan Trustees that advises a way forward to ensure that the Diocese of Hallam best meets the needs of its young people.

The report concludes that it is vital for provision to be made for a ministry which will guide and enable young people not only to fulfil their baptismal obligation, but also to fully experience and enjoy the good news and freedom of the Gospel.

The advice given is that the way forward to best meet the needs of the young people and young adults in the Diocese is to co-ordinate a form of Youth Ministry which is rooted in parishes, schools and other educational establishments utilising and developing the wealth of skill and ability available. The responsibility to contribute and thus ensure the provision of effective ministry to those young people and young adults is in the hands of whoever reads this document.

1. EXTRACTS AND REFLECTIONS ON CONVERSATIONS WITH PARISH PRIESTS AND ADMINISTRATORS.

The emphasis of family as the first point of formation and the role of parents as the first catechists in their child's early years appears to be of diminishing importance in a materialistic world. This was a regular point of concern raised by many of the Clergy. On numerous occasions the following questions were asked:

"How can young people be expected to value and cherish their faith if they never hear about it or experience it at home?"

"It is a big ask to expect young people to come to church if their parents don't come"

"Quite often once the young ones stop coming, the parents follow their lead – it's the parents that need the training, not the young ones!"

However, other comments gave counter-balance e.g.

"Stop testing parents! What is a "good Catholic"? What is our mission anyway? Surely it is to welcome and embrace which means we should be welcoming and embracing, not pushing them away!"

Many Priests expressed sadness that some young Catholics began primary school unable to recite the Lord's Prayer, which to them suggested that prayer did not play an important part of that particular family's life. Other Priests commented that many young parents were asking for a form of basic catechesis for themselves, which bore out the theory that for many adults, their own formation stopped at the school gates when they left at 16. A similar experience was recounted by a Year 1 teacher who had been approached by parents nervous of the fact that their children were to receive instruction for the sacrament of First Holy Communion and they had suddenly recognised a gap in their own knowledge and understanding of the Sacrament. These parents were mainly young adults in their early to mid-twenties who had left formal education at 16 and up until now were happy to keep God in Church on a Sunday. It is imperative that parents are fully supported in their work of catechising within the home as one priest pointed out *"It wasn't my school that first took me to church, it was my parents"*.

It is a reality that the experience of family for many young people in today's world is not that of their parents or grandparents. There are many loving family environments which strive, often in unfavourable and difficult circumstances, to create and maintain a way of life that gives importance to the formation in faith of their children. There are also many loving family environments which do not include both birth parents and so the children of the original union find themselves part of two loving family environments.

As in all things of life, some young people are more able to cope with this than others. However, it must be recognised that there is a tension for young people in these, not so rare, circumstances which might be hard for others to understand or even acknowledge.

For example one Priest was approached by a young parishioner

“I might not be at church every Sunday from now on Father”;

The Priest gently probed for the reason behind the young man’s impending absence and was told

“Well, it will be okay when I am with my dad, ‘cos he will bring me, but when I am with my Mum, she doesn’t come to Church anymore so I won’t be able to make it”.

This example highlights the terrific tension for some young people between the need to be attentive and sympathetic to the feelings of one parent without alienating the other and the strain of trying to adapt to imposed circumstances in such a manner that keeps everyone happy. Of course it could also be that the young man needed his Priest to be aware of what was happening thus creating a channel of support for the future.

Thus the importance of family commitment cannot be underestimated. It is what Dr Clare Watkins² would call

“Catechesis in the ordinary, the nurture of growing up in faith”

In her article “Where faith can Bloom” (The Tablet: 26.02.05), she suggests the need for a

*“Re-awakening [of] our understanding of the household as a place of primary formation that we can begin to see what parish communities can do for young people and, more importantly what they **can’t** do. For such catechesis in ordinary is precisely **not** about courses, groups and classes. It is about the patterns of grace and Christian life in the home.”*

Yet in stating this, there cannot be abdication by the parishes, indeed it places new demands on Parish life and ministry, which call for a more flexible and less structured approach, which in turn could mean walking an unfamiliar or even unknown path for many of us. However, if it can be agreed that the most formative part of ‘growing in faith’ is in the daily routines and upheavals of life, then the home must be a primary place for evangelisation and parents must be encouraged and equipped to carry out their fundamental parental ministry, not through a course, not through yet another programme, but through recognition of the importance of the mundane; the prayer at meal times, the falling out and making up, the heated family debates, the precious value of spending time as a family. How that might sit with the reality of parental relationships which many young people live with and in most cases accept as the ‘norm’ is not as desperate a challenge as it may at first glance appear. The challenge could be as simple as enabling the recognition of God in all things and the relevance of God to all things. The evangelists in this case would be the young people! As will be seen further into the report, it would appear that there is an expectation for young people to ‘learn their faith’ in school, however what they learn in RE is basically about their religion, their faith is learnt from observation and experience. If the role modelling in both home and school is sporadic then the relevance of God to their lives will be a diluted message. If the recommendations (as set out in the mid term report) are embraced then the role models in schools will be better equipped to provide the education in faith which is essential to the growth of individual faith. This message can then be taken back into the home and families. It may be upside down thinking, but the contagious energy and vibrancy necessary to create such a culture is within the young.

² Dr Clare Watkins is vice-principle of the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge.

The benefits of such an approach are manifold, not least of which is the 'succession planning' for the Family Catechists of the future. As will be seen in section 2 young people are asking for **the relevance** of their faith to be explained so that they can make informed choices about how to live their lives in the world of their experience. This means meeting young people in their world and celebrating the contribution that they do and will make.

The conversations also revealed that many of the Priests were like minded in their stated opinions that it was more important for young people to feel supported and valued for where they were rather than guilty for where they weren't. As one Priest put it

"This is the prodigal son all over again! His father taught him the basics, gave him free rein and then was prepared to always welcome him back!"

Then with enthusiasm he added

"It's that moment when Christ looked into Peter's eyes.....and loved him! An angry young man – overcome by being accepted for who he was and then Christ took him further into where he wanted to be."

The honesty of some of the Priests in relation to their own (often unfounded) feelings of inadequacy around young people demolishes the myth of "father isn't interested". Indeed, the evidence is clear that actually, in the majority of cases, father is very interested and willing to welcome, include and involve young people but as that is not his primary area of expertise, he needs relevant and appropriate support from people who possess those particular skills and abilities. It may be interesting to note that those who expressed an amount of discomfort when trying to relate to young people had in every instance a thriving youth group in their Parish! That is not to suggest that the secret to effective ministry to young people is to be wary of them, but it might say something about being prepared to reveal an element of vulnerability.

The amount of young people involved in the day to day life of the parish and formal celebrations varied greatly. The general feeling was that young people tend to get involved initially through their families, then as friendship groups are created and they get older they move more towards peer ministry. Unfortunately the next stage for many parishes seems to be

"Then they go to university and we lose them!"

Or even

"Then they get confirmed and that is the last we see of them until they get married or want their babies baptising".

The need to include and involve young people, particularly in the Mass was seen by most Priests as important. In many parishes there are young people who are very comfortable and enthusiastic being involved either as altar servers, readers or at defined times such as Youth Sunday and the occasional Youth Mass. In fact one Parish has at least 20 young altar servers, most of who are actively involved in the Parish Youth Group and relish the regular opportunities for Youth Mass in their parish. In other parishes young people are not involved at all, one Priest asked the question

"Is this due to the fact that they are not at Mass and so can't be involved or is it that they are not involved and so aren't at Mass?"

One Priest suggested that

“As a Church we need to stimulate young people’s imagination so they can see for themselves what needs doing and what they can do. They moan about the standard of readers, so why not get together and do some training. It is never too late to learn, I went on a 3 day seminar in Nigeria and learnt more about reading than I did in 13 years in Seminary!”

A Priest who has few young people attending Mass at his church said that he would love some young people to be Eucharistic Ministers, but

“...they don’t come, so how can they? 80% is about them putting the commitment in.”

He then gave two pieces of advice

“Instead of expecting young people to come to us, why don’t we go to them? Just to be with them and listen and chat. Young people like the emphasis on doing, but Mass is about being, so there is no excitement. Pentecostals are tapping into emotion which is fine so long as there is some depth to it.”

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“Look to people as they are and where they are – be ready to acknowledge how they like to experience things”

A Parish Administrator commented that in their parish

“.....young people are a definite part of everything – Church and Church life. They have a part and a say! Mass is inclusive across the board, we have African music, Iranians reading, Ethiopians, English, everyone! We have a small family atmosphere and so everyone has to get involved in everything. The prayer in this parish is making it grow!”

It would appear that there is no single or simple solution to enabling young people to feel and be a part of the parish community, as one Priest commented:

“If young people were at Mass then the community could be integrated. Why should a separate case be made for them? But as part of a parish their needs are just as important as everyone else. We need to provide a proper grounding in their faith just as for English, maths science etc. Without the information, how can they make choices?”

“Often the media and authors of fictional books will present the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in a misleading or erroneous way and this affects our young people. How can we best impart to them a more authentic understanding of what is behind the genuine teachings of the Roman Catholic Church”.

During the conversations, it was almost universally agreed that

“The influence of society cannot be under estimated. At the moment, in this country, there are so many influences that compete, it really is ‘not the thing’ to be Catholic.”

A Priest in full agreement with this statement suggested that

“We should enable young people to question their own attitudes to faith. If you want a deep faith, you must ask questions”

And yet another gave this advice:

“Spot the Kingdom of God and where you find it – put your shoulder behind it!”

There was also support for the example to be set by adults.

“...Adults showing a way of faith which is inspiring to others”

“Manchester United play good football which is whole hearted and sincere. Instead of sending out questionnaires and asking young people what they want, just lead by good example”

A lesson learned by experience was

“It is important that young people get an opportunity to ‘give out’ rather than just be on the receiving end. One of the best things that we ever did was going carol singing in Nursing homes. It was quite a fag to organise, but they really enjoyed that and so it was worth it and they want to do it again next year.

In a similar vein:

“Sometimes they need to try things before they know they will enjoy it. For instance, to get them to experience the Palm Sunday Walk to the Cathedral, I bribed them with the promise of a ‘MacDonalds’ on the way home. They really enjoyed the walk although they found the service a bit long!”

The difference in approach to young people in parishes was as diverse as the young people themselves for example:

One Priest had quite specific advice to give to all those involved in the ministry to young people in the form of a four point model built around ‘Fascination’:

- *Create in the hearts of young people fascination for the person of Jesus Christ*
- *Foster a deep and personal relationship in Jesus Christ*
- *Be totally fascinated in God in the ‘here and now, the tragedy and joy of life*
- *Develop a fascination for the relationship between prayer and liturgy which means putting the effort in*
- *Develop a fascination in the hearts of young people in the beauty and history for God in the parish.*

He also suggested:

“The measure of a good Parish is its relationship with its Catholic School – This is an excellent Parish

An alternative approach suggested:

*“Ultimately, let them **Be**, in a framework that is safe. Allow time for reflection so they can appreciate their own selves. We almost need to show people how to be at peace with self – not always in the sense of meditation, although it can be through meditation. Remember not all quiet is peaceful”*

Then came a timely reminder from a Priest 50 years ordained:

“...wrong thinking is that everything has to be liturgical. Remember the Church is also in the factories, offices and on the streets. Anyone can be a witness of Christ wherever they are. So maybe it is better to recognise that the body of Christ is out in the world not hidden away in a building”.

As regards the life of the Parish, there was much agreement that there needed to be a balance which included young people in general parish events, yet also provided activities suited to their age groups otherwise there could be a danger of expecting them simply to 'fit in with' the activities of the older groups. For example in one Parish many young people turned up and took part in the Whist drive, but not many older ones came to the football match – not even as supporters!

Another observation made by a number of priests was that young people enjoy well populated situations for example, when asked why a youth event in Retford had been successful, they replied "Because there were loads of people there!"

One priest wanted the following to be recorded

"There are lots of good things happening and have happened, especially here in Sheffield. Ad-hoc things spring up so there needs to be space allowed for things to grow spontaneously"

The following comments are taken from the conversations with Priests and Parish Administrators with regard to the 'ideal' Diocesan provision:

"Youth ministry within the Diocese could facilitate and enable. Create a spirit throughout the Diocese to bring people together – not always physically...to monitor, to guide, to help, a facilitator, an advisor. We need someone with an overview of the Diocese and experience of other Diocese so there can be a sharing of good practice. Someone to encourage good leadership and local initiatives

"...don't think we should have a youth service, but a have Ministry to young adults, someone who inputs to all aspects – dangerous if it becomes a separate entity. They would need a foot in every camp so that we can call on their expertise when needed."

We need an 'over arching' person to help us with "where can we go?" Who do we talk to?" How do we do it?" which means we need a facilitator so that it becomes parish led, enabling us to meet identified needs, not presupposed ones.

"It is important to have Diocesan organised events such as Lourdes Pilgrimage – very important for the Parish team, World Youth Day – shows the international scene. Walsingham pilgrimage – that is good for the younger ones. It must drive Sr. Marie mad because of lack of response. But where there is nothing, help is needed to get it started"

"We need a central youth point to link together the people out in the parishes, to give support to the youth workers who might feel isolated at times and to leave them alone when necessary. Maybe a contact once a month for a chat and to listen to some moans."

A Parish Administrator went on to say that as much as they appreciated Diocesan 'do's', the cost always caused a problem

"We have a credit union for youth, but in justice, how can we ask mothers who struggle to pay for a day out? We can't refuse anyone so..... How can any of ours afford to go to Lourdes? Or World Youth Day or even to Bamford? Our dream would be to get a bus so that we could go to the beach for a day, imagine...games on the beach and no shops!!!"

A general comment was that information of events arranged by the youth service was received too late for arrangements to be made or in some cases no information received at all. The general feeling was that information in the Hallam News was not enough as not many people read it or the articles were not prominent enough. On the other hand there have been occasions where information has been sent from the youth service office into Parishes and it has not been passed on to the youth contact. The subject of parish contacts also prompted one Priest to comment:

"How come, the youth service organise something, no one wants to go and suddenly it's my fault! There is no youth contact in this Parish because no one wanted to be it... but again that is my fault and I am supposed to go out and find one... where from?"

Conversations with Parish Priests and Parish Administrators revealed an almost overwhelming sense of support and encouragement for the young people of our Diocese. In some cases there was a refreshing honesty of

"I don't know how to relate to them."

"I am not of their world, and nor do I want to be, but I would support them in any way I can if I just knew what they wanted".

A Priest suggested the wisdom of Gerard Hughes

In another case there was the liberating and genuinely loving comment of

"Be prepared to let them work things out for themselves....we must be brave enough for a sense of freedom to develop whilst guiding them to see the opportunity"

2. PRECIS OF RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY CONDUCTED IN THE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AND THE JOINT CATHOLIC AND CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL OF THE DIOCESE

A questionnaire was put to all pupils in Catholic High Schools and the Joint Catholic and Church of England High School in the Diocese. Unfortunately some young people did not recognise the questionnaire as an opportunity to 'have their say and be listened to' and so answered "dunno" or "nowt" or "ar8" to every question. However, 4350 pupils did respond and with a generous amount of honesty. Each school has received a copy of their pupil's responses.³

Responses to the questionnaire confirm the fact that life is full of contradictions, especially in the formative and adolescent years. An example of this is shown in the large amount of responses to the survey which mention the importance of

"... being with friends, people who share your faith, people who care about you, in a friendly atmosphere, "

This seems to confirm that young people enjoy gathering in like minded groups, where they feel safe and part of the norm. Which, in turn seems to contradict the other stated need for

"...time and space for exploration, experience and awareness of our individuality and of our faith.

Overall, 98% of responses stated positive feelings about being part of their school community. To the question "What does it feel like to be part of this school community?" the most popular response was 'Good'. The more detailed responses show the importance of

"...a sense of welcome, belonging and being included."

As well as

"Feeling safe, feeling supported; and it feels like I am part of something"

The responses show that many young people are attracted to situations where they are invited to participate and feel a greater sense of welcome and belonging, where the diversity of their gifts and talents can be celebrated. They are not so good at situations that appear to offer too much consistency, often described as 'boring! (whatever that may mean?)

For the question "What do you **not** enjoy about being part of a Catholic School"

15% said they were picked on or bullied for attending a Catholic school,

12% did not like compulsory RE, (this figure was much higher in individual 6th form responses)

10% said regular Mass in school,

8% felt that bullying was still an issue.

25% said "Nothing – I enjoy all of it (or similar comment).

The remainder of the responses ranged from "sometimes feel as if beliefs are forced down my throat" to "Too strict, especially about uniform"

However.... To the question "How does your school help you in your life as a Christian?" 12% said they felt RE helped them and 13% enjoyed regular Mass in school!

³ Copies of the responses (without names) are available in disk format.

70% said that charity work was important, however there were some issues around not being able to support red nose day and a sense of only being able to support 'Catholic' Charities.

20% enjoyed having a chaplaincy in school and 60% commented on there always being someone there to talk to, being there for you.

The responses also show that 'Faith' is not only important but personal to the majority of the young people surveyed. The question "What do you like about your Faith?" prompted a variety of encouraging responses not least of which were

"I know there is always someone there for me and that I am loved even when times get tough"

"That it is not complicated"

"That I belong to something much bigger"

"That God will forgive me"

"That there is a heaven"

"It is much more than prayer"

"I love it, I can do stuff for a guy who saved my life!"

"Makes me feel special, puts me somewhere in the world"

Many were quite definite about how their beliefs affected their life. For example

"They help me to make the right choices and decisions"

"Not at all because they are totally included in it"

"I try to treat other people as I want to be treated"

"When I pray, I feel safe"

whereas for others it was quite straight forward:

"They stop me playing football on a Sunday morning!"

"My beliefs mean I get picked on"

However, approximately 17% felt the impact to be none existent, negligible or negative.

For the majority of the respondents their learning of faith was identified as being within Religious Education, rather than from the whole experience of attending a Catholic school.

When the responses

"Make Mass/Liturgy more fun"

were explored further in the listening sessions, the actual underlying meaning became

"make it more enjoyable and accessible, less stiff and formal – it's supposed to be good news!"

"Showing respect doesn't mean being miserable, make it come alive!"

It seems that for many the experience of a 'Solemn Mass' in a Church situation means miserable faces rather than 'mysteriously impressive' and something that is done to you rather than participatory. The majority of responses to the question "What could the Catholic Church in this Diocese do to support you on your faith journey" show a definite need for an explanation of relevance, especially in traditional worship, along with a wish for an 'enjoyable' experience.

3. EXTRACTS AND REFLECTIONS OF LISTENING SESSIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS

Listening sessions took place with representatives of yr10 and yr12 pupils; members of Parish and Deanery youth groups; members of the University Chaplaincies and young parishioners who fell into none of the above categories.

During conversations with young people the main (and usually first) point of discussion was around Liturgy. A recurring concern was that, especially in a Parish situation, all members of the community should be included in acts of worship. They realized and described the importance of maintaining a balance between joyful praise and quiet reflection, between reverence and acclamation.

Music is an important medium in the lives of many young people, it has become a necessary aid to revision, study and provides (usually loud) accompaniment to most social occasions. It is not surprising then that more modern music within formal Liturgy is a common request.

“There has been some inspired and wonderful music produced especially over the past 50 years so why do we hear the same old and tired hymns over and over again?”

Examples of successful balance and mixture of the old and less old can be found every week at the University Chaplaincies and on many occasions in Parishes where songs and hymns have been chosen with reference to both sacred scripture and the requirements of the parts of the Mass.

Scripture also came under discussion, a common request was to make scripture understandable and relevant to their experiences and lives. Suggestions for change ranged from

“During Sunday Mass, let us have a ‘teen’ liturgy for post confirmation age, led by a young adult”

To

“...put the readings into a language we understand – my Nan doesn’t always understand them so it’s not just me!”

An example was given by a young man that, when he lived in Germany, teenagers would go into the crypt at the beginning of Mass. The scripture of the day would then be read and the group would discuss what it meant in modern times and how it might affect their lives and behaviour. He also said that at times the readings prompted discussion about much wider issues. They then re-joined the rest of the congregation at the Profession of Faith. He said that this helped him to understand what was being asked of him in his life and that he felt a much more part of the Mass a result and that it never seemed too long or boring because it was interesting.

A comment which came up at some stage in every ‘listening’ session was

“The ‘monotonous drone’ of some of the readers – “they don’t even try to make it interesting.”

When challenged, most agreed that they themselves probably couldn't do much better. Equally one conversation with a Priest revealed that when he has asked a young person to 'do a reading' "They tend not to want to!"

The same issue came up regularly during conversations with priests who emphasized the importance of effective training for people (of all age groups) to the Ministry of Reader and emphasizing the importance of communion with the Lord through the Word.

Homilies also came under discussion

"It might be relevant to me in about ten year's time, but what about now?"

"If they are going to take so long, why can't we have comfy chairs?"

One of the suggestions was for an opportunity to ask questions during the Homily, there was almost a sense of disappointment when it was explained that this practice has been around for at least 30 years!

A regular theme of the 'listening' sessions was

"Why are we being singled out as a group? Are you going to have Masses for the over 40s or the over 60s?"

The majority of young people do not want to be seen as separate to the rest of the community, that they feel they should be included and recognized as 'a part of', that they have a part to play that is not merely 'performing on Youth Sunday'.

Whilst the majority enjoy the opportunity to take part in 'Youth Masses' and through their responses are asking for even more opportunities, there is also a desire to be 'involved' in the everyday life of the Church. "Why do you have to be male and over 55 to do the collection?"

In one school a group of yr10 pupils suggested that they could choose the music for a Mass, prepare the Penitential Rite, the Liturgy of the Word and the Bidding Prayers and take it into the Parishes in an attempt to show that a Mass prepared by young people can be an enjoyable yet reverent celebration They also suggested that they could include young people from the particular parish that they were visiting in an attempt to get them involved and encourage them to be involved in the future. They thought that this would be particularly useful in Parishes where there is a distinct lack of attendance by young people

There are parishes where young people do take an active role in the life of their Parish, but the responses of the young people suggest this could be more widespread across the Diocese.

One priest in particular gave encouraging comment to the challenge

“Make it more relevant to our lives”

When he agreed that:

“...in making scripture relevant you don’t have to lose the essence”

a comment which supports the recommendation of the General Instruction to the Roman Missal:

“The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be heightened if the texts of the readings, prayers and songs correspond as closely as possible to the needs, religious dispositions and aptitude of the participants” (313)

However, it is not just scripture that needs relevance to the lives of young people. It is apparent that whilst ‘faith’ has an importance and relevance to many young lives, established church does not. It is this relevance which they are seeking that provides the biggest and probably most exciting challenge for youth ministry in this Diocese. The fact that they are seeking and are asking for support in that search shows that the door is still open on their side

A quote from the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortation “Ecclesia in Europa” 28th June 2003 when talking about shaping a Christian mentality in ordinary life, gives us guidance as to how this might happen:

“...Combining the ordinary and culturally significant with the spirituality of the ancient and traditional is one manner in which we can dialogue between the proclamation of the Gospel of hope, and the culture that young people live in”

Or to put it another way:

“If we disparage the world we are disparaging God’s beauty, if we disparage the Church we ignore the wisdom of ages. Therefore we must see both as aspects of youth ministry. Our ministry to young people is calling both into the same place. The world does not do this but we, the Church, do. We do this in our schools, in our parishes, in our liturgies.”⁴

The positive attitudes displayed during listening meetings in Parishes, Schools and University Chaplaincies suggests that young people are not apathetic about faith or religion, but are becoming increasingly cynical about the perceived hypocrisy within the Church and frustrated by the slow nature of change. The following comments bear this out:

“What is the point? I have been going on about this (abuse for attending Mass in school) for ages and nothing is done. I leave in May so there’s no point in my trying to take it further”.

“Whatever they say they’ll do, nothing happens in the end”.

⁴ David Wells speaking at the ‘Hope’ Conference 2002

The phrase 'abuse of power' was used to describe a range of issues and concerns, from the betrayal of trust issues arising from the headline sexual abuse stories to the important but mundane issue of a Priest deciding what colour shoes should be worn by altar servers. (This discussion got quite heated when someone revealed that their Priest bought them black plimsolls to wear on the altar whereas most servers were expected to supply their own!). There was much comment about the rules of the church regarding who may and may not live together/marry/have children/ become Priests, however one of the longest discussions was the sense of injustice felt by a group of young people on behalf of the celibate priests! Their main concern was that married priests from the Anglican Church who 'come over' to the Catholic Church can have children and sex, but the Catholic Priests can't.

The level of emotion expressed during these discussions bore out the theory that young people set a very high value on openness, fairness, honesty and transparency or as one Priest put it

"Young people can spot a fraud a mile off, it's as if they can smell insincerity!"

The question:

"If God's love is unconditional, why is it that when you most need support, say your husband/wife has found someone else, you're not even allowed to take communion?"

is an example of a common pattern of acute misinterpretation and misunderstanding of actual Church teaching.

During the listening sessions (and in their responses to the questionnaire) many young people have expressed a desire to learn more about and have the opportunity to discuss church teaching on issues such as Sanctity of Marriage, Sanctity of life, Contraception and Poverty outside the school environment and without fear of reproach. As one young woman put it

"I'm not asking them to promote it [contraception] I just want to be able to talk about it – how can I be expected to make a proper choice if I don't have all the information?"

The need for quality information in order to make appropriate choices came up often in the responses to the survey and not only in relation to the above issues. One, not unique example would be:

"Organise retreats so we can explore and talk about our faith more and then decide if that is what "we believe"

The opportunity to discuss and debate was described as "the best way to learn" and in most cases recognised as a right rather than a want. "If you want us to get our heads round it – you must let us have all the facts and be prepared to answer our questions"

It might be encouraging to note at this stage that the Catholic Church in the Hallam Diocese is not alone in its findings. The following comment is taken from 'The Burden of Youth' report⁵

"It seems that religious and spiritual issues still hold a strong appeal for many young people, but that they increasingly seek to express those beliefs outside traditional religious channels and to incorporate them into their lives at an individual level. This seems to be connected to the educational trend in which young people are encouraged to take an exploratory approach to their school work, rather than accepting the perceived wisdom"

Responses during the audit plus visible activity in society show that through active involvement young people are prepared to make a positive contribution to key social and justice issues such as Anti-Bullying Campaigns and the current CAFOD campaign 'Make Poverty History'.

If it can be accepted that direct action is the key motivator for many young people then it would make sense for opportunities to be explored and developed for their involvement in other areas of church activity. This issue was discussed at length when representatives from each of the high schools were invited to a 'Feedback Day' hosted by St Bernards High School. These young people had already been involved in the 'listening sessions and had made response to the questionnaire circulated in each school. The purpose of the day was for them to receive feedback as to the general results of the questionnaires and, based on the results, for them to provide suggestions and advice as to how that information could be acted upon.

One outcome of the day was a decision to create a Diocesan Youth Council or Forum for Young people or Youth Assembly, which would address relevant and topical issues from a young person's perspective. It was agreed that the 'Council' would be chaired and managed from within and that any adult involvement would be through an equivalent to 'Clerk to the Justices' as found in law courts, which to their mind would prevent negative experiences of school councils such "being talked out of it" or "promises made but nothing happening" yet encourage appropriate guidance and advice to be given. It was also agreed that in the first instance membership would probably come from the 'feedback group' however, as more young people became aware of the council, 'ambassadors' would be elected so that each school/parish/deanery would be represented. They agreed that a two tier model similar to that of other Diocese could be adopted, where one tier or house has representatives of the 14 to 17 age range and the other tier would have representatives of the 18 to 28 age range. The whole council would meet once a year, probably in a residential setting, and each tier or house would meet separately at regular intervals during the rest of the year. Further suggestions included 'open' meetings which would have a mixture of fun and business. There was wholehearted support and enthusiasm for the initiative to be up and running as soon as possible, however, it was accepted that the Bishop must be in full agreement before any actual moves were made and grudgingly accepted that the time frame could depend on the outcome of the audit. It was agreed that each chaplaincy co-ordinator would be the

⁵ Produced by The Henley Institute on behalf of the Salvation Army. 2001

initial point of contact and would record the names of those interested in being part of the formation group.

A further suggestion was that a sub-committee of the Council could be involved with the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission. A meeting was set up between members of the commission and a spokesperson for the 'feedback group' to explore the possibilities. The idea was explored, welcomed and, at a further meeting, developed by members of the commission. The suggested title of the group is to be "The Justice and Peace Advisory Group" and its purpose "To provide an additional perspective to Justice and Peace issues which will better inform and enhance the work of the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission." It is a strong recommendation of this report that impetus for this initiative is not lost. To this end, the spokesperson has agreed to contact the members of the 'feedback group' to organize a delegation of young people who will attend the official Hallam Justice and Peace Day on 1st October 2005. A further recommendation would be that if the DYMC is in post, they will attend the Justice and Peace meeting on the 21st September to discuss the initiative in more detail.

The 'Feedback Day' also produced a strong suggestion in relation to formal liturgy whereby issues directly affecting young people might be used as a theme for a specific Mass e.g. Peer Pressure. The intention would be that through an appropriate choice of readings, Gospel, prayers and music, awareness could be raised amongst the whole community as to what 'peer pressure' actually felt and looked like.

*"Older people use the phrase 'peer pressure', but they use it as a blanket phrase, whereas we **know** how damaging it really is"*

Many quotes from scripture were put forward as examples which ranged from Doubting Thomas to the Prodigal Son.

At each and every listening session there was an encouraging and unqualified enthusiasm and energy emanating from the young people. There was also a firm expectation that this time someone would take notice of what they were saying.

Hallam University Chaplaincy

The importance and value of the chaplaincy to the young adults can be seen in the following statements

I've been coming for 5 years! It's wonderful"

"Much better than home parish, I only kept going there so I didn't upset my Mum."

"This is the best thing that has ever happened to me and it is needed in other places in the Diocese."

"When I came here it was so friendly and welcoming. When I went to Church at home people at school (Catholic) thought I was a 'Bible Basher and Holy! But here I don't feel like that, I feel I can take part in my church without caring what other people think. I am really comfortable."

The generosity of spirit extends out of the Chaplaincy, many of the young adults spoken to were in favour of taking the experience out into the parishes

We are willing to go out into parishes, not just to tell them about chaplaincy, but also to help if we can by showing the young people about Liturgy and different forms of music. Things we need transport to go any distance, but we want feedback – do they want us?"

A young man who was present at the Diocesan Assembly asked why nothing had come of the proposals made. He suggested that

"The Diocese needs to get going and appoint a young, 26ish youth officer who can relate to young people"

One young woman suggested that the reason the chaplaincy was so good was because it is run by an 'executive committee'

"Every year it is open to everyone and people are encouraged to get on it. People in other parishes tend to be static, the same faces. Here everyone in this group has been on and 2 are on at the moment. Which means that even if people are not on the 'exec', there are opportunities to start other groups and be actively involved and will be supported by the committee."

There are numerous activities for the chaplaincy members such as prayer evenings and meetings to which guest speakers are invited, barbeques and walks out in Derbyshire.

As one person put it

"There is something for everyone, lots to get involved in or even just turn up for Mass. Where ever you go you will have people coming to Mass, not looking for socialising. Mass goes for a purpose personal to them. And that is okay."

Sheffield University Chaplaincy

There was an amount of concern verbalised that any changes to the form of youth provision to the Diocese must include changes to the way that Mass was presented to the young people. One young man was quite insistent

"...make them listen this time, too many things have been started and then just fizzled out".

His main concern appeared to be with the standard of music in the parishes in general. *"Good music is vital to good liturgy, look at the evangelicals, how does their music enable young people?"*

He then went on to offer his and his peer's services to offer music ministry training to volunteer musicians in Parishes.

There was great support for the way in which the chaplaincy was run and the freedom it afforded to the people who go there. They explained that the culture within the chaplaincy was one of empowerment, enabling and support. That the Chaplain

"...remains in the background, nudging, encouraging. Letting us take risks and at times leaves us to struggle. It is important to allow people to get it wrong sometimes.

The general feeling was that this was the model to be adopted by the Priests of the Diocese.

"If you want young people to be part of a lively vibrant church, then maybe it is the 'church' which has to change and become relevant to everybody"

A recent article in the 'Tablet' reflects many of the sentiments emerging. The article was written by a 23year old man and was explaining the appeal of Pope John Paul II. to young Catholics, however, in the closing paragraphs of the article he writes

"Within our own society it is important that we do our best to let our young people know that there is a place for them within the church, by opening up dialogue on the contentious issues that young people must deal with on a day to day basis ..."

The main theme emerging from both chaplaincies was that they had a concern for the spiritual welfare of young people in our parishes and were willing to share the richness of their own experiences. They agreed that a form of peer ministry to parishes was workable if parishes were prepared to be flexible about when they could go so that studies and exams were taken into consideration.

4. ACTIVE YOUTH GROUPS, DEANERY INITIATIVES AND CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUTH LEADERS

There are active youth groups within the Diocese which provide examples of good practice and reflect a good range and depth of effective ministry. Each has something to give to the others and the common theme emerging is that committed and skilled volunteers are the key. For the main part, the volunteers have few recognized qualifications, however are providing a level of service to young people that would be envied in the professional world of youth work. The following examples are from youth groups visited.

St Mary's Edlington

This small but vibrant and committed group meets most weeks in the church hall. The group are involved in a variety of activities including organising and hosting a 'Tramp Supper', to make people aware of the issues of homelessness; 5 a side football, basket ball, and rock climbing. The involvement of the young people in the parish is such that *"Family Mass is most Mass now!"*

Their responses during the 'listening session' asked for *"more support for our youth leader"* and a greater flexibility from the church to *"let father get on with it"*

They seemed very concerned that young people should be listened to by 'the Church' and that liturgies and services be 'modernised' to include all members of the congregation. The age range of the group is 13 -17.

The group is led by one very capable volunteer who sees the role of Diocesan provision to be

"A sort of resource base which, would help to create parish links, to help with ideas and mainly to give some support. Come and visit us occasionally and show some interest in what we do"

St Paul's Cantley,

The response to the question "What form of youth ministry would be most useful to you?" was

"It would be great if there were a group of young adults who could come in maybe once or twice a year and work with us for a day to prepare something specific"

The experience which prompted this comment was that in Lent 2002 a 'team' of young volunteers from the Briars in Crich had spent a day working with the youth group. The day culminated in a very powerful act of worship based on the Stations of the Cross and which was shared with the rest of the Parish.

For the past 21 years, the volunteer youth leaders within the parish have organised an annual retreat to Edale in Derbyshire. Between 25 to 35 young people aged 12 to 18, 6 young adult leaders and 4 -6 older adult leaders are involved in this retreat which is usually led by a Priest e.g. Fr Graydon, Fr Long, Fr Sexton and Fr Grady from this Diocese and more recently, Fr Day and Fr Farrer from the Middlesbrough Diocese, however, this event does not mean that every retreatant is visible at Mass every Sunday of the year, indeed, it is more likely that some will be regular attendees just before and for a few weeks after and then probably at intermittent times during the rest of the year – unless of course there is a specific event in which they are involved such as preparation for Confirmation, Lenten and Advent services.

It is interesting to note that in this Parish Confirmation candidates must be 14yrs or older and for at least the past 3 years, all confirmands have continued to worship at St Paul's on a regular basis. The strength of this group is described as:

- the commitment of the volunteer leaders
- the commitment of the young people
- the 'home-grown' young adult leaders
- they share social time and enjoy each other's company

The leaders and some older members of the group organise an annual pantomime which invites all age groups from the Parish to be involved

"It is from the infant chorus that the next generation of youth group members emerge!"

One response from the volunteer youth leader to the question "What Form of Support from the Diocese would You Welcome?" was

"Didn't need/get Diocesan support to start the core group, don't need it now. I felt that we needed to do something for our young people within the parish. My fear was that involving outsiders at that stage might have meant they would try to change us or get us into things that we weren't ready for or channel us in a way that we didn't want to go" "Keep it local, trusting and familiar, if it is too big it loses its heart." "We need more information on practical matters such as insurance, regulations etc. Also a contact list for other parishes would be useful."

"It might not be very far in miles to get to Sheffield, but have you any idea of the cost of transporting youngsters from here? Then there is the difficulty of getting people to accompany them!"

"Youth ministering to youth – that works!"

St Joseph's Handsworth

The youth group meet on a regular basis and can only be described as dynamic, committed, vibrant and vocal!

They advertise their events and meetings through a page on the Parish Web Site and through leaflets which they design and produce themselves.

Examples of their activities are:

- Youth Stations of the Cross. The stations were led by the young people and followed by an opportunity to go to confession. The evening ended in the Crypt with pizza and chat. The young people felt this evening was a good combination as it allowed for preparation for Easter and an opportunity to meet with their friends.
- Skating at the Ice Rink
- Youth Walk: The Palm Sunday walk into Sheffield to meet at the Cathedral with other Parish groups
- Padley Walk
- Walsingham Pilgrimage. This includes an overnight in Walsingham

The listening session included much discussion relating to the impact of the change of Parish Clergy and the difficulties experience for all, including the Clergy, of trying to adapt each to the others ways. It was suggested that now positive relationships are being formed it could be useful for the young people to offer their experience to give encouragement to groups in other parishes who might be in a similar situation and feeling despondent or confused. This led onto a wider suggestion that individuals from St Joseph's could also help new parish youth groups or groups in the early stages of formation. Suggestions of how they could help included:

"...we could go and explain that its best if you have a mix of things, sometimes it's good just to sit and talk and other times you can be out at a social such as bowling. It is also good to get involved with things like the Walsingham pilgrimage and stuff"

"I'm good at talking, so I could help them break the ice..."

During the discussion around the question "What form of Youth Ministry, provided by the Diocese, would be most useful to you?" It became apparent that the young people and the leaders really wanted the same things:

"Someone to come and spend time with us to chat and listen"

"A link between parishes and parish contacts"

"Help us with ideas and stuff"

There was a general agreement that most existing 'Youth Service' events could be arranged by Volunteers in Parishes and shared out each year. An example was the Five-a-Side football Tournament. One of the Adult leaders said he would be willing to organise it so long as he had some help and a different parish took it on the following year.

It was also from this group that the suggestion for a new method of communication between youth groups came. The suggestion was to have a 'password protected' web site which each youth group could contribute and benefit from. For example the site could:

- give details of forthcoming events,
- suggest ideas for future events,
- provide evaluations of past events
- give advice and support to each other

Although one of the leaders in the group had the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to produce and maintain such a site, it was suggested that other groups might have people with similar skills and so why not have a pooling of resources?

The Annunciation Church. Chesterfield

This enthusiastic and energetic group meet on Friday evenings. They are led by a very caring, capable, approachable and professional volunteer. A contract has been prepared for the members which explains clearly what the club is about, expected and acceptable standards of behaviour, individual and joint responsibilities to the club, they must write in their name, address and date of birth. The contract also states how the proceeds from

subscriptions are spent. The member must then sign to say they agree with the terms of the contract and their parent or guardian must also sign.

The following extracts are taken directly from the contract:

Aims:

The club is available Friday evenings 7.00pm to 9.30pm to boys and girls from the age of 10. There is no upper age limit. It is a Catholic Youth Club, providing members with a safe place to relax, meet new friends and further develop their skills of cooperation, communication and care.

Behaviour

*Members are expected to respect other members, adults, equipment and the premises. All members are to contribute to the running of the youth club by preparation and clearing away. **Respect and good manners must be expected from all members. Members will not be allowed outside the building at any time unless under the supervision of an adult.***

The appreciation of the young people is evident by the respect and affection which they show to the leader through their responses to requests, their behaviour and their language. They are a lively, happy group who say that there is nothing more they need.

A recent development is an initiative by the Parish Priest and the youth worker to form a group specifically for young adults. The first event was a pizza evening with 20 young adults and was a huge success, the second event was a quiz night to which the whole parish were invited. The intention for this group is to provide them with an opportunity to meet, to chill out, to discuss issues and to spend time together.

Our Lady of Lourdes, Hackenthorpe

The approach to youth ministry is very different to any other in the Diocese; here it is truly 'community' approach. There are two levels of group: the 11 – 16s which is 'not too religious, but rooted in faith' with approximately 15 to 18 members and the 'Kids Zone' which is aimed at younger children and has approximately 20 members.

The 11 -16 group meet once a week and are led by a very capable volunteer who is supported by a group of volunteers, the approach to youth work is "get them interested in loads of different activities and then let the spiritual aspect come through". Art work throughout the premises show this to be a very effective form of ministry. 5 members of the group are currently engaged in the 'Certificate for Community Volunteering' which is the equivalent to a GCSE or NVQ level 2. The group take part in a wide range of activities and they try to organise their meetings in a practical way. For example

- A community day which involves the whole community not just the catholic community and to which the Sheffield Youth Service provide resources (free!)
- An evening of 'pure games'
- Outings such as climbing, canoeing, bowling, skiing, Laser-zone and MacDonald's
- Preparation of a 'Graffiti Wall' showing examples of positive graffiti.

In autumn the leaders, including the priest, take the group away for 3 nights usually to one of the PGL centres or to a Christian based centre with activities, There are usually

20 young people on this event. At some point in the weekend they have Mass which was observed with interest when they were in Wales

"We prepared a room with loads of candles and things to create the atmosphere. The other groups were very interested, especially when they heard us praying and singing. They didn't make fun of us, but were watching and waiting when we came out!"

Even though funding is an ongoing problem, the parish will always fund a young person who can't afford to take part. An example was given of a troubled young man (non-catholic) who was 'losing his way' and causing a few problems in the parish. Without giving details which might identify the young man it is sufficient to say that after a great deal of encouragement both pastoral and practical, he has now teamed up with another young man (parishioner) and

"...at the moment they are having a positive effect on each other. What happens next...? But at least we have tried."

The Priest tries to go to each group and

"He organises the 'parental consent' bits. The young people readily accept him and although they are not afraid to kick and shove him in a game, they respect his role as a priest at the right times"

This group intentionally avoid the 'youth club type set up'

The Kids Zone is not about outings it is designed around creative activities held in the hall or the grounds of the church. 3 very capable volunteers run the Kids Zone.

The Parish Priest acknowledges that in this parish "there are many experienced people who are good with young people, which is not true of every parish"

The young people confess to being very content with the current provision and cannot see how any Diocesan intervention could help. The Leaders simply ask for "a bit of moral support, ideas and links to other parish groups".

St Mary's High Green

The youth group are responsible for organising a Saturday evening Mass once a month after which they meet in the hall for a couple of hours. The group were totally involved in the discussion and many constructive comments were made regarding the length and content of the Mass in general. The young people appeared totally at ease in their contributions during the Mass and accepted it almost as a way of life. The group is almost a 'halfway house' between youth club and youth group. The meetings are not confined to the Hall. Most meetings in winter will be about spending time together in the hall, however, others will include trips out such as bowling or activities such as walking. The group all take a part in the planning of activities and seem very enthusiastic about the whole set up. There are a group of committed and enthusiastic volunteers who seem to inspire the young people with confidence.

Sacred Heart, Hillsborough

The discussion was carried out by their Youth Leader. She reported that “they did it, but weren’t really interested” There recorded responses related mainly to their involvement at Mass.

The average age of the group is quite young and so it is run more on the lines of a youth club – a situation with which they seem very happy and comfortable.

St Ann’s. Deepcar and Stocksbridge

The young people in the group at St Ann’s are striving to be ‘self sufficient’. They have their own management committee and the treasurer is a yr 11 student from Notre Dame School. Even though the group is based at St Ann’s, they do try to work jointly with St Mary’s parish in Penistone. The leadership team is made up mainly of young adults who are supporting and encouraging the young people to take more responsibility so that they eventually ‘take over’. This team believe strongly in peer ministry and show excellent role modelling and example to the younger members of the group for example:

- One young leader is a Eucharistic Minister
- Another is a proficient musician, who also teaches music at St Mary’s High School.
- A third is a commissioned reader
- A fourth is a Catechist and organises the altar servers

They describe the young people as being “really involved in the life of the Parish, not just accommodated” and enjoy a real mix of spiritual and fun times. The group enjoy total cooperation from parishioners who automatically include them, accept them and expect them to be a part of parish life.

For example, 50 young people went carol singing and took a small gift for each of the elderly parishioners they visited. The gifts were bought using the proceeds of their fundraising activities. They currently want to sponsor a disabled parishioner to go to Lourdes with the Diocese next year. They raised money for and organised a Christmas party for the elderly parishioners. Their next venture is to be involved with the SVP, one of the leaders is attending meetings to assess the most appropriate form of involvement.

If the young people have arranged the music for Mass they take on the responsibility of ensuring the congregation are familiar with the hymns, even if this means teaching them before Mass begins. On occasions they dramatise the scriptures and are “trying to set up a ‘Homily’ with father – maybe an interview style homily”!

At the parish BBQ the young people decorated before, cleaned up after and worked very hard during.

When the previous youth leader, Sr Angela, announced she was leaving the parish, the young people arranged her fare-welling at the local Bowling Alley and the rest of the parish were invited and many of them joined in!

One of the leaders put on a Country/Irish Dancing night to raise funds for the group and virtually the whole parish turned up. Another parishioner heard that they wanted to raise funds and so cancelled the waiters he had hired for a very special Birthday party and recruited the young people instead; apparently they did a fantastic job.

There has been a reverse experience of peer pressure in this parish as those who are involved in the Mass get their non-churchgoing friends to turn up and support them with the result that many are coming back as regulars.

The young people also support new families to the parish by going and sitting with the young children and helping them through the Mass. This not only releases the parents to meet and speak with other adults but also gives an early welcome to the children.

A noteworthy comment from a parishioner was

“A couple of years ago no-one spoke to each other at Sunday evening Mass, now people wave, acknowledge and smile. I’m sure it’s because of the youngsters.”

The group say that now they feel ready to branch out and make contact with other groups in the Diocese. They felt that they had a lot to learn and a lot to give to other groups.

The leaders suggested that the reason for the ‘success’ of the group was

“The key thing is they feel appreciated which in turn engenders trust and confidence. Father ensures that the young people are never left out and in turn we keep the parish up to date with events through the parish forum.”

In terms of support from the Diocese the leaders suggested:

- Opportunities for sharing of ideas with other leaders, nothing formal, just for us to gather and talk.
- Involvement in a Diocese wide youth retreat, maybe as a result of the gathering day
- Lourdes seems to be at a ‘funny time’. So many pupils are doing exams and teachers have other commitments
- We get loads of support from Father so don’t really need much from the Diocese.

St Williams. Sheffield

The youth worker at St Williams has been in post for 18 months and it is a part-time paid post.

Members of the youth group are from yrs 7 to 9 (11 to 14yrs) It was agreed that the older ones couldn’t commit to meeting on a regular basis as they had so many other things going on in their lives.

During term time, the group meet every Thursday evening and every second Saturday evening for Youth Mass. They dramatise the readings and take part in the music group. The leader expressed a sense that some of the young ones are forced to come to Mass, but

“...do turn up and do have lovely ideas that the parish enjoy. For example once, during the bidding prayers they invited the parishioners to come to the front and light a votive candle as they silently said their prayer”

The Thursday night activities vary from walks in summer to laser quest evenings to chill out time.

There are a group of adults who helped to set up the group and the youth worker meets with two of them on a regular basis and feels supported by them and is confident that they would help out if needed.

In terms of developing the group the worker intends to gradually introduce a more spiritual aspect to the meetings and had considered inviting speakers to the group, but doesn't want to 'scare the young ones away' It is in these areas that she would like support from the Diocese. Other areas where the Diocese could provide support would be to

- Create the opportunity to meet with other youth leaders to share ideas and maybe talk through difficulties.
- Provide a resource bank with ideas for liturgies, feast days, icebreakers and trips
- More links with schools so less work is duplicated.
-

The youth worker generously offered her skills and talents to the Diocese and other parish groups for help making banners and big 'things' for special celebrations.

DEANERY INITIATIVES

Barnsley

A group of adults in the Barnsley deanery have gathered young people to an initiative called "MAD" standing for Music, Drama and Dance (appendix?). At the first meeting the adults made presentations to the gathered young people followed by open discussion as to 'was that what they wanted?' and 'what else can we do?' The reaction from the young people was very positive. The question "What form of Youth Ministry, provided by the Diocese, would be most useful to you?" prompted a discussion about the need for a link between parishes so they could find out what other groups were doing and join in if asked! One of the young men had rung around many parishes trying to find a football team to challenge to a game. Eventually he found the Handsworth group and a match was arranged. There is to be a 'return' match

"..but this time we are having a ref that isn't their coach!"

Sheffield North Deanery - Quiet Day Away.

This is an annual event for the deanery and takes place at Mount St Mary's School. 13 young people took part in the day and had their own programme led by a team of young adults. The day culminated in the celebration of Mass, which the young people prepared. Prior to the event there had been apprehension verbalised by some of the older parishioners about the Mass being prepared by the young people, however one of the Priests present reported that at the end of Mass there had been 'spontaneous applause, not for the young people but for the whole thing!"

A broad evaluation of the day reports that it was a positive experience made more so by the input of the young adults.

Rotherham Deanery

Representatives from each parish in the deanery are in the process of developing 'Deanery Youth Group'. The planning meetings are conducted in a professional and organised manner with a clear vision of what they hope to achieve. The first event of bowling, has recently taken place. At the end of the event, the young people were asked for their suggestions as to 'what next'. Their responses and any consequent action will be detailed in the final report. As a group, the form of support they would expect from the Diocese would be to 'support, encourage and advise'.

Many Parish Youth Workers and Priests described their ideal form of Diocesan provision to be one that would provide a link between parishes so they could share best practice and ideas and also be there for advice and training when necessary, a style which would support the parish and help them to 'do their own thing'.

5. AREA/DEANERY YOUTH WORKERS

At the Diocesan Assembly a priority for action was to undertake a feasibility study into the implications and benefits of employing youth workers on an area/deanery basis. The majority of conversations with parish workers, parish priests and young adults indicated that the issue was not seen as a priority, rather a “nice to have”. In only 2 of the conversations was the subject introduced as an immediate priority. There was much support for the study to take place in order for the practical and financial implications to be fully balanced against the value and benefits such posts might give to the quality and accessibility of youth provision.

In St Marie's, a parish youth worker has been appointed and both Fr Sexton and Kieran (the worker) have agreed that this initiative can be used as a ‘pilot’ which would inform a feasibility study undertaken.

The Dearne Valley deanery appointed a youth worker specifically to work with the schools and parishes, unfortunately due to illness, the post became vacant and the worker has not been replaced. There is a mixed reaction within the Dearne Valley deanery as to the success and value of the project, which raises a separate question of ‘how can success be measured?’ in such a subjective and pioneering area of work.

The Mother of God parish has in the past employed two separate youth workers who achieved much and provided a good level of service. Once again, the vacant post has not been filled. This could be due to a number of factors, not least that there has been a highly competent and energetic volunteer active with the young people; it will be interesting to note what happens next in this parish as the volunteer has recently had to scale down her commitments due to personal commitments. It is also worth noting that *“...before we appointed someone, provision for young people was always high on the agenda of parish meetings, but after they went, it has hardly been mentioned”*.

Experiences in other Diocese show an equally mixed reaction. A statement from the Y Church report by Avril Baigent published in 2002 (commissioned by the RC Diocese of Northampton) in reference to paid deanery workers:

“Deanery projects are an obvious way of spreading the cost of a youth worker between a group of churches and many people would like to see more of them. However, in this country, such projects have had, at best, a chequered history. There have been two in the Diocese.....neither of them lasted beyond their original contract length and both came to an end in some controversy.....Of all the projects investigated around the country, none have continued past their original contract length.....In Coventry, the deanery worker became an area worker when it was seen what a difference she was making locally. In other cases, though, projects have come to an end with anger and frustration on both sides.”

Avril then goes on to detail the factors which were common to each case. A summary of her comments are:

- Very high expectations – what was really wanted was a parish worker at a fraction of the cost.
- Lack of resources – at times it is necessary to concentrate activities in one place, but this is sometimes disliked by other parishes, for a variety of reasons.
- Inequality of contributions – Parishes paying more expected more
- Lack of deanery/collaborative approach – each parish wanted to see results on its own patch
- Lack of clear vision for the role – without an effective job description, there are no clear measures [of success] and no way of telling if the person is fulfilling their role.
- Difficulties in managing the role – it is difficult to work to many pay-masters
- A short-term approach – Usually these posts were funded for 2-3 years. However, the reality is that it can take up to two years to build local relationships.

It can be seen then, that the experience in Coventry stands out and there are many factors to consider before embarkation. The positive angle is that there could be a future for paid area/deanery workers so long as we take heed from the experiences of others and are prepared to invest time in a fair amount of consultation and a considerable amount of discernment!

6. REFLECTIONS ON CONVERSATIONS WITH HEADTEACHERS, DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS, HEADS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CHAPLAINCY CO-ORDINATORS, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CO-ORDINATORS.

One place where young people are evident is in our Catholic schools. One place where active participation in liturgy, prayer and charitable works is evident is in our Catholic schools. The places that both Catholics and non-Catholics are eager to 'get in' are our Catholic schools. However, it would be precarious to be complacent. For one thing, the over used statements "For most of our children, school is church" or "For most of our children the only experience they have of Church is school" as correct and accurate as they may be, are in danger of becoming platitudes that encourage the myth that 100% of pupils are eager to embrace and experience the fullness of Church within a school situation; in a manner that is contrary to their experience of Parish.

The reality of the situation appears to be that the committed and sincere regular Mass goers (whether in school or Parish) go in spite of criticism and at times ridicule from a minority of their peers and harassment from pupils of non-faith schools. These young people are asking for:

- More involvement in the liturgical and day to day life of their church is it school or parish.
- To have a voice that is respected and heard and
- To be taught and encouraged in their faith in a manner which allows discussion, question and openness.

Through their responses [to the questionnaire] the pupils have recognised the commitment to them from certain members of staff and chaplaincy teams within our Catholic schools.

The schools of the Diocese (primary and high) provide rich, powerful, thought provoking and deeply spiritual liturgies along with the provision of a safe and supportive environment, where the uniqueness of the individual can be celebrated.

Research for this audit has shown that

- in order for these rich, powerful, thought provoking and spiritual Liturgies and acts of worship to take place,
- in order for the excellent GCSE, AS and A Level results to be achieved,
- in order for the Good to Very Good to Excellent section 23 OFSTED reports to be delivered,

much hard work and effective 'ministry' is expected to be provided by teachers and support staff throughout our schools. However, there is no uniformity of approach to equipping the staff, including non-teaching staff, in the schools with the necessary tools, skills and knowledge in order for them to effectively carry out this ministry.

There can be no doubt of the importance and huge value to all stake holders of the proactive work of the schools department in regard to opportunities provided for all staff to 'gather' in discreet and/or individual groupings whether it be sabbatical; retreat; conference or meeting scenarios. Verbal and written feedback relate the immediate and long term benefits enjoyed by participants of taking time out of the 'normal' working environment to reflect, discern and share experiences thus emerging strengthened, energised and with a renewed enthusiasm for the consolidation of their vocation.

During conversations with Head-teachers, chaplaincy co-ordinators and other interested parties it has become apparent that a holistic approach to Chaplaincy within our school communities is vital so that the desired ethos of the school will permeate all areas and aspects of school life. The basic fact is that the curriculum expects religion to be taught and so leaves little space for 'faith' to be learnt. Therefore it is the whole school experience that is relied upon to ensure that the face of Christ and the mission of the church are carried on and out. Which means the responsibility lies within the whole school community.

At the May meeting of the Head Teachers of the High Schools, it was agreed to actively support the recommendations of the mid-term report. During this meeting, the importance of ongoing and formal evaluation was stressed as was the need to ensure that the proposed post of DCMYP had appropriate support and supervision systems in place from the start.

7. COMMENTS ON RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

There has been unanimous agreement throughout the audit as to the benefit to the individual of residential experiences for young people, not least from the young people themselves. Any negative comment has been about the lack of follow-up and the difficulty to re-create the experience in school and parish. The answer to this comment might be that by its very nature, a residential retreat experience cannot be transported or transferred into a parish or school context. Nor can the experience be seen as a guarantee or means to ensure that the individual will continue or become a regular attendee at Mass. The joy is, that for some young people it could be the only spiritual experience of their lives, for others it is the one time that is given only to them, where they can be themselves without condition and recognise a love that is given equally without condition, and for others it is a good opportunity to 'be with their friends' and leave the cares and pressures of everyday life behind, if only for a few days.

At present there is no official Diocesan residential retreat facility which would be capable of accommodating the large numbers of young people who have access to this provision through their school. There are however, a number of residential centres in the width and breadth of the country which provide good to excellent accommodation and in most cases retreat programmes supported by volunteer teams of young adults. The centres regularly used by our schools and parish groups are: Savio House in Bollington; Middleton Grange in Ilkley; Ushaw College near Durham; The Briars in Crich; and Champion House in Edale.

Conversations with teachers, chaplaincy co-ordinators and priests have shown that the existing residential facilities around the country are sufficient for large groups of school pupils, both primary and secondary, and that there is an element of choice and variety which would not be available if schools and parishes were 'expected' to support a Diocesan facility. However, there is concern that

- the cost of transporting large numbers of pupils is ever increasing plus
- The booking systems for Diocesan and most local authority centres mean that their own schools and parishes get first call on places and the Hallam schools and parishes are offered what is left!

It could be that in the future these factors may outweigh the benefits of choice and variety.

The project at Bamford, whilst in its infancy, has the potential to provide residential facilities for small numbers of young (and older) people and, because of the extensive grounds and stunning location, has an even greater potential for non-residential gatherings. Positive feedback has been received from groups such as Confirmation and Youth Groups who have used the facilities for a day and the adults groups, some of whom have stayed overnight.

8. OBSERVATIONS OF THE McAULEY SCHOOL “CHOOSE LIFE” MISSION.

The McAuley school mission actually took place between 18th and 24th April 2005. However, the preparation leading up to the actual start began months earlier. The Northampton Diocese based Sion Community led the week which was targeted for years 7, 8 and 10.

During the week, the community joined staff for morning prayer, prepared and presented assemblies, joined pupils in classroom situations, arranged and led the lunchtime prayer opportunities of ‘Time out with God’ and ‘The Holy Spirit prayer’ and after school offered time to staff and parents for prayer, reflection workshops and presentations. Time and space for the sacrament of Reconciliation was built into the week as was an evening of praise during which members of the congregation were invited to be ‘anointed’ by pupils. The week in school culminated in Mass concelebrated by 5 of the Priest Chaplains and there was a final celebration at St Peter in Chains on Sunday the 24th.

The Priest Chaplains made themselves available to their young parishioners to encourage discussion and planning as to how the mission could impact on their parish. As yet the fruits of these meetings are not harvested.

Friday 22nd saw a pupil core group meet to reflect on the experience and plan a way forward. Suggestions for follow up which came out of this core group meeting included:

- Time out with God must be continued during lunchtimes, maybe Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Holy Spirit prayer to continue in school on a monthly basis
- Workshops for more banners to be made
- Reconciliation should be available in school on a more regular basis
- More year group Masses for pupils to be involved in
- Teachers to be more involved in the follow up
- More assemblies based on God
- Create a drama and liturgy group
- Need more Christian CDs in school
- Could be involved in more Charitable events
- We (Young people) should lead most of this

Comments about the experience included

“Much better than I expected”. “Not the same in Parishes with Families, needs to be in groups like this”. “When I got home and prayed, it made me feel wow!” “All of it was wow!” “God is more special to me now” “The team have given me courage to listen and hear God speaking to me” “I am beautiful in God’s eyes” “I can’t stop smiling” “This has been the best week of my life”.

The follow up is happening and hopefully will continue into the next academic year and beyond.

Many of the suggestions put forward are happening for example there is a liturgy, drama and music group which involves many teachers who have not come forward before, in fact 14 teachers came forward to offer help and support to the follow up. The Holy Spirit prayer and Time out for God are happening on a regular basis and, even more encouraging, more pupils and staff are volunteering to be involved in the prayer life of the school.

The Head Teacher and the Head of R.E are in agreement that the time and commitment given was an excellent investment and that the Mission overall was a great success. Many staff members who at first were wary and apprehensive about the nature of the Mission have said that the experience was far more enjoyable than they had expected

A recommendation for the future would be that the leadership skills of yr 12 pupils which were seen to be emerging during the week, are developed into peer ministry skills similar to those used by the Sion team to support future chaplaincy work especially in the feeder schools.

A further recommendation would be that lessons learned and benefits realised from the whole Mission experience should be shared across the Diocese maybe using the Chaplaincy Co-ordinators network.

9. REFLECTING ON THE LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE.

As was expected the overwhelming majority of young people and adults described their experience in Lourdes in extremely positive terms. The service the young people provide, especially to the infirm pilgrims, can only be described as inspirational. In fact members of Diocese other than Hallam were actually stopping Hallam pilgrims in the street and complementing them on the quality of contribution of the 'youth'!

"They are everywhere!"

"Don't they ever take a break?"

"Our Diocese could learn a lot from these youngsters – we need to be describing this when we get back!" (A comment by an American Bishop to his friend)

For many of the young pilgrims this was a return visit and for the 'first-timers' there was a general agreement that they would definitely be returning.

The young people are supported by a two tier group of leaders. On the one tier there are the 'young leaders', young adults aged between 20 and 25. The next tier is the older adults, who take the bulk of the responsibility. The Assistant Director for Youth Services currently takes the role of 'Youth Pilgrimage Co-ordinator', however it is a recommendation of this report is that the role must be officially clarified and agreed along with formal and written clarification as to who is actually responsible for the young people during the pilgrimage.

A SWOT analysis of the 2005 Youth Pilgrimage and a précis of conversations with young pilgrims and the key roles of the Youth Pilgrimage Co-ordinator have been prepared as document separate to this report.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is vital that provision be made for a ministry which will guide and enable young people not only to fulfil their baptismal obligation, but also to fully experience and enjoy the good news and freedom of the Gospel.
2. Young Catholics carry a huge responsibility for the future of the church. They are the Church of yesterday, today and tomorrow and so have a centrality to the shared mission of Church.
3. In the hands of young people, the church of the future may not look, feel or sound exactly the same as it does today. The nervousness and apprehension around this possibility must be acknowledged and gently assuaged.
4. Young Catholics are not a separate entity to the local Parish Community; they are an essential and life giving part of it.
5. The initial and basic responsibility for the Formation and Catechesis of children and young people lies with parents and extended families, supported and energised by the parish and school communities.
6. The Catholic High schools have the potential to be key means of evangelisation both to young people and, through them to their families.
7. Chaplaincy provision within high schools has the potential to make a much broader impact through enhanced links with parishes and feeder schools
8. Those who Minister to Young People in whatever capacity need practical and cohesive support relevant to their individual needs and individual situations.
9. Residential community/pilgrimage experiences have a powerful impact on the personal and spiritual development of young people.
10. Many young people make direct links between the promoting of Gospel values and social justice issues (global and local). However, the relevance of Catholic theology, the richness of tradition and the importance of the sacraments to each individual life, in many instances is lost.
11. Effective and appropriate Peer Ministry is an invaluable asset to young people as they explore their faith and encounter challenges to their developing value and belief systems.
12. Young people feel most comfortable in situations where they feel accepted, involved, included and welcomed.
13. The challenge of Youth Ministry is to encourage a culture where the ancient and traditional are embraced with the reality of the ordinary and everyday, in a manner which celebrates, proclaims and lives the Gospel of hope.

Advice for the Way Forward including Potential Value Add

The key piece of advice must be that the remaining recommendations of the mid term report appendix 1. are actioned by the soon to be appointed holder of the Diocesan Co-ordinator of Ministry to Young People (DCMYP) post and supported by the Trustees of the Diocese.

In addition:

1. There needs to be regular, scheduled and recorded evaluation of the co-ordination of youth ministry, which is formally reported to the Trustees at least on a six monthly basis. It is important that the methodology of the evaluation is both pragmatic and reflective and provides all stakeholder groups with the opportunity to contribute. A suggested method would be either a SWOT or Force Field analysis. Either methods would involve a 'scaled down' version of this audit which will provide the markers and sign posts for future development, however the task need be neither laborious nor time consuming as it should become part and parcel of the value add procedure.
2. The role of 'Youth Pilgrimage Co-ordinator' must be officially clarified and agreed along with formal and written clarification as to who is actually responsible for the young people during the pilgrimage. This information should then be publicised to all school groups, leaders and young leaders accompanying the pilgrimage and the young pilgrims.
3. The impetus for the Diocesan Young People's Council/Forum/Assembly and the Justice and Peace Advisory group initiative must not be lost.

If this advice is followed then in terms of development and continuous improvement, the work of the DCMYP should provide value add to the mission and work of the Diocese in the following ways:

Formal Education	– By working with the Schools department to provide appropriate and relevant support especially for Chaplaincy Co-ordinators and Chaplaincy teams in schools, colleges and universities
Adult formation	– By working with the Adult Formation Department especially in the area of Catechesis i.e. supporting young catechists/assistant Catechists and providing an appropriate resource for the ongoing formation of young people and young adults, which should serve to encourage the spread of good practice and provide an amount of succession planning for the future.
University Chaplaincy	– By working with the University Chaplains and their Chaplaincy Teams to prepare and provide a source of peer ministry.

- Christian life and worship - Supporting and enhancing the work of the Liturgy commission by providing agreed and appropriate training, support and guidance to young people, young adults and youth workers, in the preparation of appropriate liturgies and acts of worship.
- Justice and peace – The work of the Justice and Peace Commission will be supported and enhanced through a group of young people and young adults who will act in an advisory capacity to the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission and encourage active participation in the promotion of Justice and Peace issues. The DYMC will act as clerk to the group.
- Child Protection – By working with and alongside the Diocesan Child Protection Team, practical direction and guidance for parish workers and school staff in their pastoral role can be provided. This will include regular updating on developments in legislation thus removing the uncertainty and apprehension that still exists in some areas.
- Health and safety – By keeping abreast of current and foreseeable legislation regarding issues relating to Youth Work/Ministry, information can be disseminated in a straight forward, uncomplicated and timely manner.

And finally, the following words of advice should be kept in mind:

“We are all making the same journey, but the route is different for each and we have to discover it in freedom....There are guidelines given to us within the Catholic Church through scripture and above all, through the teaching tradition of the Church, but ultimately we must find our own way as we are responsible for our own journey”⁶

⁶ Gerard Hughes. SJ – God of Surprises. Darton, Longman & Todd. 1985

THE REMAINING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MID-TERM REPORT:

1. The nature of youth ministry should be one of co-ordination and support rather than direct service provision. The recommended approach would be a youth ministry that provides support appropriate to the individual needs not just of the Parish but also of the individual situation. Therefore practical advice and support to Priests, Administrators and Pastoral councils will be available and Parish Youth Workers will receive encouragement/training/development opportunities which would enable them to provide comprehensive, viable and realistic youth work relevant to the situation and circumstance of their Parishes.

2. Following initial set up by an expert, a Data base/Web page, accessible by password, be continuously updated and managed by Parish workers and youth groups. Content would include notification of events, Parish contacts, feedback from events and suggestions/advice resulting from lessons learned and success stories

4. A coordinated and collaborative approach to youth ministry is embraced which will

- enable opportunities to be sought and recognised for positive experiences of Liturgy in Schools to be transported into Parishes thus maximising existing links/relationships and minimising concern and apprehension through positive experience.

- support primary and secondary school leadership teams in the further development of their existing and vital ministry to young people in schools

- facilitate opportunities for Chaplaincy teams to receive initial and ongoing training suitable and appropriate to their individual needs and the needs of their ministry

- support the induction process for all staff new to the school community

- enable good practice to be disseminated to schools across the Diocese

- Support the Heads of Religious Education in the 'non-curricular' aspect of their role.

5. Opportunities for peer ministry are developed across the Diocese utilising the enthusiasm, energy and talents in the High Schools, Parishes and University Chaplaincies.

6. Opportunities are created for regular listening and support meetings with groups of young people and youth leaders in Parishes.

7. Regular and informal opportunities are created for learning and discussion of specific aspects of Church teaching and its implications to real life situations.

8. a) The current initiative of a paid youth worker in St Marie's parish is used as a 'pilot' case. So that lessons learned from the experience could be used to inform a realistic and workable model for Area/Deanery workers in the Diocese. This would involve structured evaluation of:
- How value is added to the provision of Youth Work/Youth ministry within the Parish
 - How the involvement of external support and supervision i.e. Huddersfield University, has impacted on the post holder and ensuing service provided
 - Implications of the post on volunteer youth workers
 - How the post has integrated with other Parish work
- b) A feasibility study be undertaken to identify the actual financial and legal employment implications of an area/deanery youth worker (paid) post. The initiatives in Derby (Nottingham Diocese) and Poole (Plymouth Diocese) could be used as sources of information for this study.
- c) Investigation into the experiences of other Diocese using documented information and conversation with those who have personal experiences of paid local youth worker projects.
9. a) Opportunities for residential retreat experiences should be encouraged, continued and available to all of our young people. Cost must not be a factor which prevents a young person taking part.
- b) The existing residential retreat provision around the country is sufficient for the larger school groups.
- c) The Bamford project could eventually be utilised as Diocesan provision for a different concept of residential experience. i.e. for small intimate groups such as 6th form friendship groups, study days for yr 11, 12 and 13 where a couple of nights away might get life back into perspective, pre-confirmation and post confirmation groups (mid-teens rather than younger children)