



‘Heart speaks to Heart’ - being a missionary and synodal diocese.

A Six-Week Course for the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia

WEEK 4: FORMATION (PILLAR 3)

Historically, Catholics belonged to a variety of organisations, sodalities or groups. In each there was a sharing and a formation in faith. Nowadays, life is more fragmented and disparate. People are at different levels and a different points on the journey. As I have travelled across the diocese and listened to people’s stories of their faith and life, again and again, I have been aware of the silent struggles that many experience.

Alongside this, is an awareness of ‘sitting’ with many of the questions shared by their neighbours:

These are some of the questions that many in our society ask, often implicitly. We know it is only ultimately in Jesus that each of these questions finds its fullest resolution.

So, we need to provide contexts where people can properly explore the questions that are at the heart of modern living, and where they can receive accompaniment and guidance from the richness of the Church’s tradition. I would hope that some of the initiatives offered in Evangelisation and Catechesis will continue to give opportunities to grow in confidence in sharing our faith with others, as they grapple with these questions and so that we can give a credible witness in Wales and England.

It has been wonderful, as I have travelled in the Diocese, to experience something of the faith of good people giving so generously of their time in so many Catechetical programmes – First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA, Baptism and Marriage. So many people work so hard, and so faithfully, to ‘pass on’ the faith. A key reflection for a parish or school is: St David reminded his followers:

“*A chedwch eich ffydd a’ch cred – keep your faith and your creed*”

We all need Formation in faith to do this. We know that we learn step by step, and that learning is life-long. What do we offer, in the parish, school, or at diocesan level, that will assist people at different levels and stages, so that their journey of discipleship is also deepening and expanding? One initiative we are launching is a



partnership with the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University Steubenville. I believe that such a partnership can really help us develop more in-depth resources across the Archdiocese.

The Church's vision is that every moment of teaching, of catechesis, is also a moment of evangelisation. Let us take this to heart more fully in our country. We catechise others, by teaching them the different aspects of the Catholic faith, but we need also to evangelise them, leading others by hand to a living encounter with Jesus that can change their lives as it has changed ours.

As disciples, if we have not really had a sense that we are called by Jesus, that He desires us personally, then being formed and sent forth will be like building on sand.

For reflection (Week 4):

- 1. This pillar picks up the question many may have had especially perhaps when looking at the reflections surrounding youth work or Evangelisation in earlier sessions: 'I am not ready to do this – I/we haven't got the skills, etc.'. Would you say this pillar of 'formation' can fill the skills-gap?**
 - 2. Would we want it to – after all, once equipped, we would no longer have the 'excuse' of saying we can't do it...?**
 - 3. What has your own experience of 'formation in faith' been throughout your life? Has it made you 'ready for Mission'? If not, what was lacking?**
 - 4. How can we make the most of this new 'formation offer' – individually and as a parish? What needs to happen next?**
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