

SECTION 3

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THE TENISON WOODS EDUCATION CENTRE

Review of the Christian Formation and Ministry course

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To evaluate and comment on the quality, content, structure and delivery of the Christian Formation and Ministry course;
2. To advise on possible future developments of the Christian Formation and Ministry Course;
3. To examine and comment on the way in which the course delivers skills for life and ministry; and formation in faith;
4. to comment on how the structure of the course aligns with the Diocesan Pastoral Plan;
5. to evaluate how the course succeeds in achieving its stated objectives;
6. to identify existing and potential areas within the course which could be:
 - further developed by the Tenison Woods Education Centre,
 - developed in partnership or cooperatively with other Catholic Adult Education institutions,
 - relocated to other Adult Education initiatives in the Diocese, or
 - reduced or eliminated;
7. to comment on
 - the perceptions and experiences of students and graduates of the course,
 - how the needs which brought students into the course are met, and
 - ways in which these might be improved;
8. to examine
 - the progression and retention rates of students in the course,
 - the implications of these for future course direction, and
 - ways in which they can be improved;
9. to assess the appropriateness of the staff profile of TWEC in terms of qualifications, experience and levels to support the course and possible future developments;
10. to comment on the viability of the course and, more specifically, on future staffing needs;
11. to identify opportunities for flexible delivery, including appropriate location of learning centres within the Diocese and distance education;
12. to comment on the relationship between the course and further opportunities for accreditation and continuing education.

The above task should be considered in the light of:

- *the self-review documentation on the program*
- *the initial objectives of the program*
- *any major changes which have occurred in the subsequent direction of the program*
- *any major changes in Diocesan planning.*
- *accepted Adult Education models of learning*

INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear.....

The Congregational Leadership of the Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar, through the Board of the Tenison Woods Education Centre, has commissioned a review of the Christian Formation and Ministry Course.

As a participant in the Course your contribution to the review would be extremely valuable.

Accordingly, we are inviting you to participate via the attached survey. The survey consists of four sections:

- Participant Profile
- Experience Questionnaire
- Objectives Survey (to be filled out only by those who completed the Course)
- Reflective Responses

We also invite you to make a more detailed written submission should you so desire.

We appreciate the commitment in time and effort we are seeking. Given the nature of the Christian Formation and Ministry Course we hope that the reflection required of you for this task will prove to be personally enlightening and rewarding.

The information provided by survey returns and submissions could lead the External Reviewer and the Review Sub-Committee to seek further input from some participants through a small group discussion or individual interview. Please indicate at the bottom of the survey if you are willing to be contacted in regard to such an eventuality.

All survey returns and submissions will be treated with confidentiality. The Review Report will not provide identifying information (unless consent has been given). We request that respondents identify themselves in order to allow the Review Sub-Committee to seek further, or clarifying, input.

May our joint efforts be fruitful.

Mary Ringstad
Convenor
Christian Formation and Ministry Course Review Team

Christian Formation and Ministry Course

COURSE PARTICIPANTS' SURVEY

A: PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Please complete each question to enable us to establish a clear profile of the participants attracted to this course of study and reflection

Name: _____ Age at enrolment : _____

Gender: (please circle) male female

Parish: _____

Country of Birth: _____

If Australia, are you of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander origin? (please circle)

Yes No

Year of enrolment in course: _____

Centre at which studies were undertaken:

Did you complete the 3 years of the course? (please circle)

Yes No

If not, at what point did you leave the course:

Did you proceed to the Practicum? (please circle) Yes No

Did you complete the Practicum? (please circle) Yes No

What was your main employment whilst doing the course?

Did you receive financial support for your study? (please circle)

Yes No

If yes, was it from your Parish/TWEC/Employer or other?

What was your highest previous educational qualification?

Previous Faith Education/Formation:

How did you come to know about the course? (tick most important source)

Diocesan website/literature _____ Parish Bulletin _____

Talk given at Church _____ Friend _____

Past participant _____ TWEC staff/course _____

Other (please specify)

Why did you enrol in the course?

Develop skills to undertake ministry _____ Faith Development _____

Both _____

Other (please specify)

I am/am not willing to be contacted in relation to providing further input (delete one option)

Contact phone number: _____

Christian Formation and Ministry Course

C: OBJECTIVES SURVEY

IN YOUR CASE, HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU THAT EACH OF THESE OBJECTIVES WAS ACHIEVED AND HOW IMPORTANT WAS THE OBJECTIVE FOR YOU?

Circle the number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 next to each item using the scale of: '1' = not satisfied/not important and '5' = very satisfied/very important

to you	Satisfaction					Importance				
BY THE END OF THE COURSE PARTICIPANTS WILL:										
S1 Have reflected on their life's journey.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
S2 Have developed skills to enhance their capacity for involvement in their own life and ministry.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
S3 Have a deeper knowledge of and access to the theological, scriptural and historical sources of the Church's Tradition.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
S4 Have engaged in forms of learning which affirm and challenge their call to ministry.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
S5 Have developed skills for life and ministry as a result of being supported and challenged to reflect on their own adult development and their faith education	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
S6 Be informed about local developments and events influencing the direction of parish ministries in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
S7 Have enhanced their capacity to participate well in groups and in collaborative ministry within their parish communities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Respondent: _____

You may wish to expand on your responses to any of the above. Please feel free to do so, using a separate sheet if necessary.

Christian Formation and Ministry Course

D: REFLECTIVE RESPONSES

Your reflective responses to the following questions will be most appreciated.

(If insufficient space, please use a separate sheet)

Respondent: _____

R1 What about the course did you consider essential?

R2 What would you consider the most critical features of the course?

R3 What was a significant point of growth or transformation for you in the course?

R4 What questions/issues/considerations have arisen for you out of the course?

R5 Has your experience of the course made it easier/more difficult for you to be part of the Church? How?

R6 What did you want to get from the course?

R7 Did you get it? Please comment.

R8 What should be done differently?

DETAILED COMPILATION PARTICIPANTS' REFLECTIVE RESPONSES

Question 1:

What about the course did you consider essential?

COURSE CONTENT

32 of respondents considered aspects of the course content to be essential:

15 made general comments: 'every unit was a building block'; 'I enjoyed all the subject matter'; 'knowledge of scripture, Catholic history, liturgy studies and planning, communication, prayer and prayer services (the planning of)'; 'the section on church history'; 'faith development, bible study, diocesan study'; 'celebrating Mass, going through each part of the Mass and recognizing the formality of the Mass is essential, also other celebrations of reconciliation'; 'scripture study, moral theology, liturgies, the chance to discuss the issues'; 'the scriptures & Eucharist & Mass'; a proper consideration of the nature of truth'; 'the Sacraments, Fowler faith development'; 'post Vatican 11 focus, study of Vatican 11 documents, focus on Jesus, traditions, Church History, Sacraments, aspects of ministry, theology. Spirituality, prayer'; 'church history'; 'theology, especially our roots, also the practical units'; 'the scripture and Christology, liturgy and prayer units, I believe were outstanding, Moral theology too!'; 'input from lecturers'.

11 referred to the Catholic Tradition: 'the learning of the theological, scriptural and historical sources of Catholic Tradition which gave an understanding of how we became the Church of today'; 'the history and the 'old' traditions of the Church'; 'I believe I have a thorough understanding of the Church founded by Jesus 2000 years ago, how it has been shaped by the passage of time and how the Church as we know it today is the outcome of Vatican 11'; 'the course gave me an insight into what I am and should be as a Catholic'; 'my own faith development and knowledge of the Catholic religion, both historically and presently'; 'not had a Catholic education-but Catholic from birth and own choice, the opening of the "doors" to further explore and understand my faith were invaluable'; 'to find out where the church is currently at and to see if and how I can be part of it in a truer and deeper way'; 'that participants were given the current teachings of the Church on theology'; 'the opportunity to debate and discuss issues on the church where it is now and where it may be heading in the future'; 'I found the course very essential for myself especially with where I was with my own church'; 'I would like to limit my answers to the Ecclesiology course. In my opinion, the definition of Church in *Lumen Gentium* is what is essential about the course'.

6 related to Scripture: 'the "breaking open" of the Gospels'; 'up to date information on scripture studies'; 'scripture study'; 'the Hebrew Scriptures'; 'Scripture Hebrew and Christian'; 'scripture sessions were excellent'; 'deepening of understanding of scripture'; 'A broad understanding of the scriptures and how to continue to study scripture. Linking the scriptures to Catholic Tradition, Christology and Ministry'.

TEACHING METHODS

13 considered various aspects of the teaching methods to be essential:

3 were general comments: ‘The way it was run in the first place! It was directed to thinking adults. It assumed a vibrant faith life on the part of the participants’; ‘the “face-to-face” lectures/discussions’; ‘the face-to-face component of it. Distance learning or learning within a small group without input from the lecturers would never have worked for me’;

6 related to assignments: ‘assignments essential-challenged to think and get more out of the course’; ‘the face-to-face lectures/discussions and the assignments. The later caused me to reflect at a deeper length than I may have’; ‘assignments (being challenged and needing to digest material) and good feedback (critical++)’; ‘the fact that assignments were of a reflective nature’; ‘attendance and the completion of assignments’; ‘the assignments. They were a great way of reviewing and reflecting on the content of each unit’.

4 commented on the reflective activities: ‘reflection, journaling, sharing prayer’; ‘journaling, written responses, sharing with other participants, reading, reflection and retreat days, reflection sessions ’; ‘While I personally struggled to produce the reflection papers I felt that they would be one factor that I consider essential’; ‘self reflection’; ‘prayerful reflection, reading, journaling, presentations and discussions’.

10 considered their faith development to be essential: ‘Lynette Pearce’s course brought Jesus to life as important and caring to and of me,’; ‘finding and developing a personal relationship with God. Growing in knowledge and skill to participate in “community”. The teachings and study of present day perspectives’; ‘some extension of experience, motivation, spirituality+++ of the local parish’; ‘My own faith formation, so that I might serve Jesus better. The better my knowledge of and relationship with Jesus and the entire Trinity, the greater my ability to evangelize and spread the good news’; ‘developing a right relationship with Jesus and right relationships with others’; ‘I did the course as a renewal of my faith and I believe my expectations were satisfied. It was very enlightening’; ‘our relationship with God through Jesus and the workings of the Holy Spirit in this’; ‘that in its broad scope of Christian spirituality the course reinforced the interconnectedness of Scripture and Tradition to the person of Jesus’; ‘The chance to evaluate my own prayer life’; ‘growth of own faith, learning how to pray’.

AN EXPERIENCE OF A FAITH COMMUNITY:

4 commented on the essential context of a faith community: ‘meeting as a faith community each week and the Sisters revealing Jesus to me’; ‘I thought the course was well administered, well taught and presented. It did become a community for me, the group work was essential to my learning’; ‘the community of experience, the knowledge that the Holy Spirit was present. My enthusiasm for the knowledge imparted to me’; ‘the ability of the group to journey together and individually in our faith development and spirituality’; ‘the acceptance of the participants where they were, in their life journeys, with their baggage, and in their faith journeys’.

4 didn’t distinguish particular features: ‘All aspects of the course were essential. Each session allowed participants to question and explore that which was being discussed’; ‘commitment, caring of presenters and participants. Preparation and keen presentation + skills evident in those giving the course gave me confidence that the course was worthwhile and significant’; ‘that the course be adult and honest in presenting’; ‘I found the whole experience

great. Each of the different areas although short, whet my appetite for more'; 'the high quality standard. The intellectual stimulation along with faith growth'; 'I thought that all of the course was essential so that one could get a balanced view of faith'; 'for me it was all essential'; 'I thought that all of the course was essential so that one could get a balanced view of faith'; 'growth of our faith, deepening of understanding of scripture, hearing how to pray, the reading and discussion, input from lecturers'.

Question 2:

What would you consider the most critical features of the course?

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

21 respondents considered faith development to be a critical feature of the course: 'learning the history traditions of our faith; realizing the absolute centrality of the Scriptures; acknowledging the "we" not "me" of our faith'; 'the reflections offered at the end of each year allowed for the changes that had occurred to be written down and further developed'; 'this course is firstly a faith formation and that is what it answered for me. It challenged me then to decide if I had a ministry call in the present day church'; 'the stages of faith. Different people in different stages of faith development'; 'understanding the primal story, how God's love for each and everyone of us (no matter what faith we belong) is unconditional'; 'it's sustenance! The course sustained my exploration of ministry/church, it was like a regular indulgence at a favourite restaurant'; 'Mass and prayer time'; 'I don't have a most critical feature, I just believe it helped me spiritually', 'The study of the Old and New Testament and its relationship to our faith today'; 'reflection on what was happening to me as a result of doing the course, understanding that I am really a part of the profound "mystery".'

Some connected faith development with their Catholicity: 'both the information on Catholic faith and my faith development'; 'the course enabled me to assess and evaluate my faith as a Catholic';

Some connected faith development with course content and ministry: 'study of Gospels and scripture, historical aspects of Church's development (in all areas), ministry'; 'faith development, this was an overall umbrella over sections. History of Church and diocese'; 'I thought the development of the course, OT, NT, personal growth was extremely critical, rather than teaching ways to engage in ministry'; 'content and breadth, the length (3 years) gave me time to grow and evolve'; 'the subject content, and the encouragement to reflect on our personal life experience and faith journey. I would have liked more time to share all of this with others during the course, but it has continued to happen after the end of our course'; 'broadening and deepening knowledge of various aspects of faith and religion'; 'being challenged to grow and learn more about my faith and my own ability to minister'; 'understanding Church history and tradition and my calling to "participate in discipleship".'

Others connected faith development with the experience of community and course content: 'a liberal focus on Church and Scripture. Calling participants on to higher stages of faith. Providing experience of community'; 'sharing ideas with others in the group, prayer workshops were great'.

COURSE CONTENT

11 respondents considered course content to be critical: 'Retreats, Hebrew scriptures, New Testament, prayer unit, understanding Jesus'; 'theory'; 'exploring Jesus the Christ, the sacraments, independent study and reflections, completing the tasks'; 'it covered a great number of subjects, all were relevant and none were glossed over but were presented in a meaningful and reflective way'; 'that is a difficult question because I thought everything was

relevant and essential. I specially enjoyed: Christian Formation, Vatican 11, Church History and The Mass’;

‘The Hebrew Scriptures, Prayer sessions, The trinity, Liturgy and group dynamics however the whole programme has some critical features it is hard to single out a feature that has special significance’; ‘the communication section’; the sound theological foundations’; ‘The study of the Old and New Testament and its relationship to our faith today’; ‘the study of sacramental life. The sacramental link with our everyday activity and connecting our relationship with God to all we do’; ‘The direction of the course, how each unit flowed, connected, challenged, stimulated and fulfilled participants’ questions, needs and development’.

THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY

8 respondents commented on the importance of sharing the journey: ‘learning in a group of people of similar faith orientation, benefiting from group discussions and other ideas’; ‘the opportunity to share insights and points of view as a group was very important to me. The input from the lecturers was challenging and exciting, the opportunity to discuss it with everyone was essential to my understanding and learning’; ‘the contact with others on their journeying, like-mindedness. The yearly reviews from journals and the reflections throughout the year’; ‘meeting with other people from other parishes unified in study’; ‘sharing my faith journey and having others share their story with me’; ‘the community experience and studying scripture’; ‘the bond that was formed and the friendships made by all who participated’; ‘I have been lucky enough to be in a group in which a willingness to consider/express new or different ideas has been very positive’.

For 6 respondents the lecturers were critical to their experience of the course: ‘faith is caught not taught! For me the most critical features were the course educators, their spirituality and obvious love of our God shone through every lesson. This influenced me more than all the knowledge they were passing on’; ‘conducted by lecturers who were professional experts in their topic area and who enthusiastically shared their love and passion for their God and Church with us’; ‘the most critical feature for me was the generous non-judgmental approach of the presenters. Each of them was very sensitive to the need of the group’; ‘the ability and the willingness of the presenters to present material in an open manner and a preparedness to discuss the issues’; ‘the teaching staff was wonderful! They led by example, their warmth, love and commitment was there to be seen every week. They filled me with a sense of excitement and wonder’; ‘It was demanding and challenging, not pap for the masses. It was given in love and this love was evident, a nurturing, encouraging, sisterly love’; ‘The teaching staff was wonderful! They led by example, their warmth, love and commitment was there to be seen every week. They filled me with a sense of excitement and wonder’.

OPEN DISCUSSION

4 respondents commented on the importance of open discussion: ‘to educate the laity, update their ideas, teach them to question, open up the path to spirituality’; ‘open discussion among participants’; ‘honesty, prayerfulness, acceptance, questioning, depth’; ‘variety, ability to stop at point to discuss issue’;

ECCLESIOLOGY

5 respondents commented on the importance of Church in their study: ‘how the church as a community can fulfil the need for our relationship with God through Jesus and the workings of the Holy Spirit in this’; ‘the development of individuals confidence in relation to Catholic faith through the study of Scripture/Theology and self’; ‘that it is showed that the busyness of the church activity is always subject to our base aim of proclaiming the Gospel’; ‘the background to our faith traditions’; ‘The Church is a mystery, that means that it is present among the humanity both as human reality and as a divine reality, because it emerges from the Trinity and is nourished by the Trinity’.

MISCELLANEOUS

1 respondent offered a more reflective comment: I believe one’s own faith and relationship with the Trinity is critical to ministry. Unit 1 of the course Revelation, Truth and Spirituality gave me valuable insights in this field. Reflecting on the basic questions such as, Who is God and Who are we? I believe are as critical to our proclamation of the Kingdom as are the activities we perform, for not only are we called by Baptism to be ‘doers’ we are also called to be “hearers of the word”. The call to religion is to “confront reality”, and to live with the questions that seemingly have no easy answers; to be open to the truth in its many forms; to listen to in the spirit of Dadirri to the deep spring within oneself and others; to be prepared to wait and to feel comfortable with the fact that we don’t always have to bring results’.

A number of respondents misread the question and thought they were asked to be critical: ‘Lack of time. The information overload allowed little time for so many new and diverse issues to sink in. The readings to the (untutored) layperson were difficult to make sense of in some units’; ‘the word ‘critical’, this is ambiguous? Most important? My criticisms of the course, too much didactic teaching sometimes felt like we were back at school’; ‘that all parish priests encourage their parishioners in completing the course and acknowledge those that do complete the course’; ‘no early marks. Work presenter too focused at times, didn’t like going off on tangents, I did’; ‘I’m not sure of this question. Am I to be critical? I consider the course to have been well thought out and covered all the different aspects of ministry’.

Question 3:

What was a significant point of growth or transformation for you in the course?

PERSONAL FAITH

21 respondents commented on the growth that had occurred on the level of personal faith:

My faith has always been a significant & influential part of my life but it was rounded in the 50's and I felt I hadn't "grown" in my faith.

1. Looking at stages of faith development
2. Sr Lynette giving me the theme of "dancing with the Trinity".

I suppose it was the gradual "owning" of the faith in which I had grown up with – A maturity of age?

Different life experiences and culture keep me quiet and away but my faith was more, certainly.

My relationship with Jesus, getting to know him, wanting to be with Him.

Jesus loves me, cares about me, has a definite place in my life & always has had. He has been looking after me "in the bad times"

My relationship with God: the Father, the Son, the Spirit. Understanding myself as reflective person and servant of this.'

I personally found the first year to be difficult – mainly the time factor, but even that has become a blessing – I felt by the end of my first year – a feeling of inner peace – the section on "Jesus of History", learning about the circumstances & time of history in which He lived has given me a new insight into the life of Jesus the Person.

A significant point was centred around "The Trinity" & "The Creed" – my prayer life began at this point but I also recognized the Sacred Feminine and Mary's part as Advocate and Mediatrix was missing in the presentation.

Faith development course was very freeing one that helped to see people can be on the same faith journey at different stages & to respond to people appropriate to the needs at the level at which they find themselves.

Knowing that God had chosen me to be in this place at this time.

That God loves me unconditionally now, and will continue to love me unconditionally forever, no matter what I have done or may do in the future. How special that makes me feel, and how much I want to spread that love to others out of love and not fear or duty.

The challenge to see God as 'other' while retaining my personal & intimate relationship with God.

The Jesus of History, Christ of Faith Unit was an area I had been exploring prior to the course.

Unit took that exploration further with increasing awareness of Jesus' humanity.

A realization of the presence of the Spirit in every aspect of our lives.

A development of my faith

Despite the turbulent history of the past 200 yrs Jesus remains faithful to his promise 'Behold I am with you always'. During his visit to Alice Springs in the nineteen eighties, Pope J Paul II used the image of a tree in a bushfire to encourage our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in their ongoing struggle for recognition. I believe in our struggles to be authentic as Church, we can take heart from the Holy Father's words: "If you stay closely united, you are like a tree, standing in the middle of a bushfire sweeping through the timber. The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burnt; but inside the tree the sap is still flowing and under the ground the roots are still strong" Another insight from Unit 1 came from a handout entitled 'Reading the Gospels, Zen style – the prelude to 'the Zen Teachings of Jesus' by Kenneth S. Leong The article looks at Jesus from a Zen perspective, that is, it looks at Jesus in the Gospels one is joyful, humorous and poetic, colourful and fun loving. Hence his call to become like little children for children are spontaneous, relaxed and act from intuition rather than from the intellect. This is a far cry from the serious and grave way we so often look at the Gospels and go about the work of ministry as if it is another chore to be done.

Reflecting on my personal "Stages of Faith".

I think initially, when I became aware that I was part of Salvific History something much greater than I've ever realized AND I have a part to play.

I have been able to connect my spiritual journey with my life journey.

The Trinity as 3 separate entities & one was particularly important in my faith development.

UNITS OF STUDY

20 commented on particular units of study that effected a change:

Each unit had particular meaning for me. Stages of faith development, ethics, Sacraments, Ministry – why we do things a certain way. Jesus of History – Christ of Faith. Prayer.

The communication unit was one that really challenged me and caused much reflection. Also the prayer unit, Sacraments and Christology not to mention the Scriptures and Liturgy.

The distinction between a "true" story and a "factual" story.

When our studies of Vatican II revealed the changes and impact on our lives since its implementation.

As course progresses I am getting a better understanding of why Vatican II was introduced & can reason why myself. I am now a member of a community.

Vatican II

I guess the whole course contributed to my growth but I would have to say that the units on the Sacramental life of the ecclesial community & the Creeds and Christian tradition were highpoints.

Trinity Module. Faith Growth (Fowlers) Prayer Module Church& Education

The section we did on the Trinity. I was amazed at the end that I had the Holy Spirit working in me.

An understanding of the Trinity that was relevant to life.

The study of the Trinity and Jesus, the man.

The Hebrew Scriptures topic. The awareness that I was listening to the same stories that Jesus listened to made an awareness connection for me.

The Hebrew Scriptures. I'm no longer puzzled or intimidated by them (well, not much).

Understanding and connecting with the Hebrew Scriptures – opportunities to discuss faith in a study situation.

The Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Scriptures, Christology and prayer as well as the liturgy unit opened up vistas of growth for me. Please don't forget Moral Theology!

The Sacrament Unit – absolutely life changing!

The understanding of the Sacraments, the scriptural base of the church documents, the connection between Vatican II changes and returning to early Christian Church understandings.'

The faith development as was outlined with Fowler, Dei Verbum.

Stages of Faith gave me a jolt into realizing the Church did understand the different steps in which the human spirit moved & there was a deeper faith understanding to be participated in.

The whole course was a "big" learning curve. I wish everyone had this opportunity so that we all thought, appreciated our faith in a more similar way (all on the same wave length).

PRESONAL GROWTH

7 respondents were aware of their growth on a personal level:

I also received a gift of writing poetry.

When I felt that the course was beyond me at that point I received understanding and knew that I was free to leave – no pressure. Belief in my decision making capabilities; further demonstration of tolerance.

It was continual – it opened my eyes both inwards & outwards. It taught me to listen to my heart
more – I moved from the head to the heart.

I have been developing since I have been received in the church since 1983 now to apply it.

I think the levels of faith & the realization of where I am at & why.

The extraordinary generosity of the facilitators in helping me achieve such personal growth.

Self-awareness

EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY

For 10 respondents their growth was experienced within the context of a community of faith:

Probably sharing with the other participants leading to a more deeper aware relationship of bonding in faith.

The appreciation of outside events impacting throughout the course i.e. Cursillo. Being supported by the Josephite community.

That the Church was prepared to educate adults and accept the Laity as reasonably enlightened, mature beings.

Other people and things have value in themselves quite apart from me and I have value in myself. Both perspectives have to work together.

A lot more accepting of where others were at in their own faith journey.

The realization that the community have the right to be involved in planning and implementing our liturgy programmes.

A better perception of church as community.

Was my deeper understanding of my faith and where I fitted into the Church and parish.

At my age I need to be warm and comfortable.

Hard to pinpoint a particular item. I was transformed by the whole experience and especially by the love and support of staff and students while I struggled with the challenges of the course.

SPIRITUALITY

8 respondents experienced growth as a result of spiritual direction or specific spiritual experiences:

Again I would have to say the personal reflection

Receiving Spiritual Direction for 12 months.

Having the supervision of a spiritual director.

The most significant point came with a reference to Spiritual direction, which I followed up.

Probably prayer & workshops.

The prayer workshops, ministry sections as well as the communication sessions.

The retreats , the humanity of Jesus. God's consistent care of mankind in Old and New Testament, the spiritual richness embedded in the Catholic Church.

The journaling.

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

For 3 respondents their point of growth was in relation to their Catholicity:

When we studied the Constitutions – it gave me the confidence to approach my PP to discuss certain issues.

I grew to an understanding of the real truths of the Catholic Church & their doctrines.

It is the importance of the local church. In fact, the local church is the concrete place where the universal church realizes its mission. From this the enculturation of Christianity and the role of the local church are posed. Here we talked about the Australian Church.

Question 4:

What questions/issues/considerations have arisen for you out of the course?

QUESTIONS OF 'WHAT TO DO NEXT' AND FURTHER STUDY

18 of responses were concerned with implications of the course for their future:

'One consideration had been to continue with some sort of study'.

'I continue to ask what are my gifts and how can I best use them?'

'Now I have finished I really don't know where to go next? Study? Ministry? Not sure which one, how?'

'What is my personal spiritual path and how does it sit with the Catholic community?'

'Where to next?'

'That the TWEC course is not able to be accredited towards a Bachelor of Theology.'

'Wondering where it would lead me. What to do with the three drawers of course material have left over whether to throw it out or treasure it.'

'When I finished the course I wondered what I was going to do next, and unfortunately I am still wondering. I have been involved in a few different forms of parish and diocesan ministry over the years but none of them have made my heart sing.'

'The question of further theological study, A BA(Theol) perhaps, with a view to being able to "use" it in some way.'

'I feel that what we've covered is only a start...there is much more!'

'My desire to finish the course.'

'Explore other faiths'.

'What are my gifts, how does God want me to use them?'

'The question of where to now after learning all this information how do I apply it to my parish?'

'I need to be continually learning, keeping informed of latest insights/happenings'.

'I would like some more formal study in Scripture and Theology'.

'I often wonder exactly what Jesus wants of me now; I don't want to lose this knowledge, I want to keep growing in faith'.

‘Where to from here? What are my gifts, talents? Frustration at lack of communication and availability of other faith development courses’.

INTEGRATION OF LEARNING WITH EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH

17 of responses indicated that this was an area of tension for graduates:

‘How to run the church family without the existence of priests-it doesn’t faze me but it freaks out my Church family. It all involves around that!’

‘questions relating to issues of faith versus clerical interpretation and control of information’;

‘conscience versus rules’.

‘It was very fulfilling personally. Those in control of the parish seem to think that the formation was not satisfactory and I need to be “formed” again’.

‘Frustration that most will not get to work more actively in ministry. Dichotomy between many parishes and graduates’ expectations’.

‘Not many questions really. I felt frustration many times why this information wasn’t being related more widely (not the fault of TWEC). Also the sense of how we might experience ministry, was really left up to the PP’.

‘How can the Church effectively communicate Jesus to the world? Lay people have a recognized status/role but how can this be brought into play. My actions and ideas seem feeble in the face of major problems in the world.’

‘I guess accepting the idea/feeling that I always will juggle personal faith, participation in a local church participation in the wider authoritarian church?’

‘We were never promised work in our parishes but the lack of support from our priests is disappointing’.

‘The hypocritical nature of the Church e.g. we are to be inclusive and forgiving but do not welcome the divorced or gay faithful into Eucharist’.

‘The men have made decisions throughout the course of the Church’s history, that are for the “good” of women, this needs to be changed.’

‘Reactionary element in the Church, power still with clergy from Curia down to PP level in some parishes.’

‘I am more critically aware of wording & language of prayers, hymns etc, what is composers’ image of God (lover or judge); poor choice of some scripture readings in lectionary (a God who punishes); sole mainstream theology of Redemption; place of woman in the Church; literalist interpretation of scripture; focus by the institutional church in keeping the faithful at a childhood stage of faith & when people move into an adult faith, question & no longer believe some Church teachings, because the structures don’t fit anymore, it is difficult to find a place where one fits. Some priests prefer to keep people at this early faith stage because they don’t want to disturb parishioners!!’

‘The deep and profound simplicity of our faith being overshadowed somewhat by bureaucracy, tight structures in Liturgy, etc, seemingly more imposed from above than spontaneously arising from the community upwards’.

‘In my parish we have been fortunate to have priests who are open to change. Some other parishes are not so lucky. Maybe the lack of sufficient priests will force change.’

‘In ministry, I find myself in conversation with those who no longer associate with the Church because of bad experiences in the past. This is an uncomfortable place to be, since as somebody engaged in ministry, I cannot help but feel in some way responsible for what has happened. In such instances, I can never succeed in convincing the person that life in the Church is not all bad and that the Church since Vatican II proclaims a God of love.’

‘the criticism of the Church and of the Church leaders often leaves me thinking “have they really got the BIG PICTURE”?’

QUESTIONS OF PERSONAL FAITH

7 responses concerned questions of faith:

‘An important consideration was the requirement too become a “disciple” of Jesus, to become Christ in the world for others.’

‘I feel free to speak about and discuss my faith with anyone. I have realized that I am at the very beginning of my journey every day.’

‘Do I have a vibrant and diverse prayer life? Do I access the sacraments and Mass as sources of grace to balance the polarities of my life?’

‘I find I am more informed about the Creeds, and now “listen” and not just hear what is being said at Mass.’

‘I feel the need to continue listening. However at this time I have availability restraints due to an aged, physically impaired parents so I have to fit in workshops piecemeal.’

‘Enthusiasm to deal with my “unrest”.’ ‘That Jesus comes disguised as my life’. ‘Living my faith 24-7.’

‘Self awareness and acceptance of self and others’ points of view’.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS ABOUT THE CHURCH

13 of responses expressed concerns about the Church:

‘The course aim for new Catholic or Ministry’.

‘We are a pilgrim church constantly changing’.

‘Where is my Church going? What will be the future development of the Church?’

‘Where is the Church going? What is the future development of the Church? We are now part of a developing expanding community. For us to move on, changes and progress must and are occurring’.

‘How to further the roles, gifts, talents and her stories of women on our communities. How to balance my environment with blessings from both males and females’.

‘How can my parish use and form a similar bonding in its ministers. Where do we go from here?’

‘Reflections on the nature of God and the mission of the Church’.

‘Where the church is headed in the future?’

‘How has the Church survived to this point on time?’

‘Where is the unity of the Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council?’

‘Insights into generational differences in faith understanding/practice. Concern that Vatican II reforms are now being challenged.’

‘Where do I fit in the church? How can I fit into the Church? What is the new way of Church? Am I part of it already?’

‘The call to evangelize is not well understood by most Catholics. How do we get clergy to encourage lay ministry? How do we deal with the pre Vatican II ideas that are strong within our parishes?’

DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS

Some responses reflected questions of doctrine:

‘What still confounds me what are “authentic” miracles as stated in the Gospels and what are not? I try to put it perspective but my “western mind” is limited.’

‘I have gained more insight into the truths of the Catholic faith and the Bible’.

‘Jesus was 100% God, 100% man and didn’t know he was God when he was man. Most people in the parish disagree and it has lead to interesting discussions’.

THE DESIRE TO PASS ON WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

This was the desire of a number of respondents:

‘I would like to pass it on’.

‘How to provide good quality faith formation for as many people as we can in our diocese, it would be wonderful if every person could do this course.’

‘The challenge of using the gifts God has given me, appreciating them every day and sharing them with others. Moral Theology taught me to be less judgmental. Life is complex not black and white’.

‘How do we encourage more people to enrich their lives by learning about their faith and the presence of the spirit?’

‘It concerns me that children are losing the faith traditions which we were taught in school as well as our homes’.

‘So much of what we learned was new to me, how does one disseminate or how can “the church” educate/inform our people of the wonders of our faith, our God?’

A FRUSTRATION WITH THE COURSE

‘In the initial interview (pre the course) I was told it would be a class, not a group. The “group” never really formed, there were several norms never attended too. Destructive, unhealthy cliques formed and the group as a class or a group failed its potential’.

A few respondents left this answer ‘blank’, they corresponded with students who have not completed the course.

Question 5:

Has your experience of the course made it easier/more difficult for you to be part of the Church? How?

IT IS EASIER BECAUSE THE RELATIONSHIP HAS CHANGED

24 Respondents stated that it is now easier to be part of the church because they could redefine the relationship:

I feel as if I now belong

The course has made it a lot easier to be a part of a Church we have many gifts but we are all different in the way we all use them. We can teach one another.

Since completing the course I have been employed by the local parish as a Pastoral Associate.

Before the course I had decided that I wanted to be a part of the church. The experience of the course has made me aware that I need to participate more actively rather than observe. Participation requires questioning, learning and relating.

Easier. Have rightly or wrongly, a concept of hope, belief in Faith, Jesus loves me. Have lost, to a large degree, religion as rules, God is a policeman.

As quoted in one of the articles – “The Holy Spirit is in people. The art is to help them become what they are. Seeing a need and acting upon it. In the work I am involved with – St V de P I find I can relate to the person in need – By seeing God in them & letting the person see God in me.

There is CHURCH and church! Somehow the course has helped me appreciate both – and accept their strengths and weaknesses.

I now feel I can be an active member of the Church not a bench sitter.

Now can clearly see the big picture view.

I feel I belong to the bigger picture of the church over 2000 yrs. I accept the difficulties of being female in a male dominated structure better.

Easier – I am more open, accepting, less rigid – more concerned with playing a role, less about results.

Easier, richer. I've gained a greater appreciation of the Church & the R.C. tradition

Easier. I understand more what the church is.

I have found I have more friendships with other people who come to the Church.

My experience of the course has made it easier for me to be part of the church. I feel a stronger connection to the past struggles of the church and therefore to our present dilemma. I know that the church will survive and her greatest asset is her Eucharistic community.

Definitely easier – an acceptance that we are all different and at different levels in our faith journey spirituality.

Easier, accept my own journey in the Church as relevant as anyone else's now.

I find it gratifying to be part of community within the church. It is home!

Easier. I am more motivated to build community without our parish; I am confident to deliver services to others to enhance their faith involvement; I understand and appreciate church more from a Diocesan perspective.

Even though I may be sitting alone in church I feel “wow” I am part of this and I want to sing out loud Alleluia.

Made it much easier in understanding and relating to Church History and its own Stages of Faith

I feel more connected to the Mass, community and the Word following the course.

Easier to understand how the church works and able to accept how things are.

Yes. I am more accepting of the Church's negative historical events, and of its human failings.

I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT

5 felt more confident to be part of church and so it is easier:

I feel I have greater confidence when I suggest or volunteer to do something e.g. this year I prepared an Ecumenical liturgy for the Parish after the Tsunami disaster. I would never have done that before the course.

I have more confidence. Before the course I tended to hang in the background, now I talk easily to visitors etc. I have gained confidence with organ playing and also I now do sacristan duties

Easier to accept my responsibility to be “in” the church in order to facilitate change.

Easier, it has given me the confidence and knowledge to participate more fully in the church and its ministries.

Easier – greater confidence in myself and my gifts. More difficult – still an anti-feminist bias by the institutional Church, in language & practice; ultra conservatism of the Vatican moving away from Vatican II; promotion of a single theology of fall-redemption which I find grates on me (there are many other beautiful theologies that also deserve a place). Greater awareness of boy's club – clergy club in action. Conclave processions & pomp & circumstance displays in Rome in the last few months as displays of power. Resistance from clergy when some valuable programmes cost money.

I CAN HOLD THE TENSION

17 respondents were aware of the tension of feeling both more comfortable and less:

I wish everyone at Mass had done the course because sometimes I feel a bit ahead of them in their Thinking & acceptance of change. But as Richard Rohr says – If you don't love the church where she is, you don't love the church.

Somewhere in between the two. I find I understand more, but often wonder why it takes so long to get anywhere.

I will always be part of the church, but in some ways I don't feel as motivated to be as active in parish life except for where my passions lie – e.g. social justice. I have moved a great deal and still find most parishes are not particularly welcoming.

In some ways easier – came to a greater appreciation of my place in Church. In other ways more difficult because of the above mentioned frustrations and also how complicated we have made it all – and the cost that has been to some people, (*frustration about why this info wasn't being related more widely*).

Easier in that it dissolved the anger of not having any adult education available in our area & relief that “someone” was prepared to do something about it. Easier in that we laity were recognized as adults in a spiritual sense, difficult in that there is not enough of it & where do we go from here?

Its difficult because of the (perceived) lack of understanding of lay people's role in the church. Easier in the six years since enrolment there's been a notable appreciation of where lay people can fit in.

More difficult because I feel even more out of step with other church members. Easier because I have a better overall understanding of our church.

Before I did this course I was wondering if I could remain part of the church – now I'm more able to live with the tensions that arise in the church because of our diversity of opinions & experiences.

A bit of both – I really enjoy the knowledge that I gained that I can now share with others – that our skills and knowledge are not used more in the everyday ministry of the church

Both! I will value to my dying day the greater understanding and appreciation I have of what we are doing and why we are doing it, but the actual lived experience often falls short of the ideal. It is a human Church and I accept that, but it's a struggle sometimes.

Having been educated somewhat in the Church's workings from a spiritual, physical, historical, human and above all divinely instituted point of view makes it easier to be a conscious member of the Church. Otherwise I don't know.

As a result of this course I find I can cope more readily with some aspects of church life e.g. I know it's not about having the answer to all questions or to solve all Problems. Less still is it about having to do everything, but about encouraging and empowering others to exercise their responsibility for the life and mission of the Church. On the other hand, I would love to be able to share with everybody the wonderful insights gained on God's great love for us and

how God reveals this in our lives, but I find that some people still prefer to see God as they did before

Vatican II and to relate to God in this way

I'm probably still in 'transition' phase

Straight after the course I enrolled in a 2 yr Christian counselling course, by an evangelical group. I was able to be confident with my faith although I felt that my evangelical friends contributed to *my understanding of grace which I feel is lacking in RC circles.*

Easier, I believe as I have more understanding of Scripture, Liturgy and Moral Theology. I now seem more able to accept the ridiculous situation that sometimes I see the Church in, especially the hierarchy.

At first, yes! Now I just have a very different concept of church, or where church is to be found. I have moved away from the parish structure but am tentatively discovering that I haven't necessarily moved away from the church.

IT IS CHALLENGING

7 more are challenged in their participation in church:

Certainly – more challenging

I would like things to move faster. The importance of church communities is paramount but it is difficult to change the culture of our parishioners from being individuals to become united people of God.

The course challenged me but confirmed my Christian formation. I am committed to my Church but I can also pray for many changes in the future. I now feel that Baptism gives me the "birth right" to say "Recognize the Feminine or Perish"

It would have made it easier, especially at first, but changes in parish worship place for me personally meant a "new start" again.

I must be an active participant in the church community.

The course has made it more difficult to part of the church because it has made me demand much more of myself. I have been given much, and want to share that with others. "Faith without good works is dead".

Yes because I now question everything. I sometimes think I am not progressive and do not attempt to change as people don't like or want to change.

IT IS MORE DIFFICULT

9 find it difficult to belong:

Probably more difficult as I see what our Church could be, especially after Vatican II but realize that the leadership is reverting to conservatism and male dictatorship.

More difficult because of political involvement (culture, nation)

More difficult – I have this great desire to use my gifts – but it is very difficult where I am – I find it frustrating.

More difficult, when making suggestions the responses are usually – the PP won't agree to that; the older parishioners will complain; that's not liturgically correct etc.

More difficult. Reminded me of some of the hocus pocus I had put behind me.

Easier – greater confidence in myself and my gifts. More difficult – still an anti-feminist bias by the institutional Church, in language & practice; ultra conservatism of the Vatican moving away from Vatican II; promotion of a single theology of fall-redemption which I find grates on me (there are many other beautiful theologies that also deserve a place). Greater awareness of boy's club – clergy club in action. Conclave processions & pomp & circumstance displays in Rome in the last few months as displays of power. Resistance from clergy when some valuable programmes cost money.

At first more difficult because I was empowered but due to family responsibilities I was unable to be involved or use my experience in team ministry.

I think to some degree more difficult. Group participation was very noticeably up and down and dynamics were all over the place and different agendas spoiled the potential of the 3 years.

In some ways it is difficult to combine what I have learnt to the still actual practices both with liturgy & application of church doctrine

I DON'T FEEL I BELONG

I still don't feel part of the Church community, I feel I participate and understand more the Sacraments, Liturgies, Participation in the Eucharist.

Easier, the knowledge I gained was enlightening and led to further study, community, I don't feel part of.

NO CHANGE

Not a lot different

In my case (already serving as pastoral associate prior to the course) I don't believe the course itself had an impact on the difficulties or otherwise of being part of the church, although it has been helpful in building a personal sense of identity.

Neither better nor worse. It has been a challenge for years. I keep hanging onto my imperfections to balance the Church's imperfections.

MISCELLANEOUS

+The meditations and the prayer times have given me a time & being "out there"

Question 6:

What did you want to get from the course?

KNOWLEDGE

14 respondents clearly expressed a desire to increase their knowledge of their Catholic faith and heritage: ‘Knowledge, confidence, a greater love for our church’; ‘More information about the Catholic faith and spirituality’; ‘I wanted information about church traditions, spirituality, prayer, Christian Tradition and our Creed. I wanted to know what I had to offer in these structures, as a female with female spirituality and insights’; ‘More extensive knowledge relating to Catholicism, enjoyment of philosophical group work’; ‘Better understanding of “Catholic”, I converted in 1985’; ‘I wanted to increase my awareness and knowledge about my Catholic faith in a community environment’; ‘A better understanding of the Catholic Faith and a new way of looking at my own faith journey’; ‘A deeper understanding of my faith traditions and how these are relevant to today’s Church’; ‘I wanted the opportunity to learn more about my faith. I had been a sponsor for someone through the RCIA program some years prior to the course, and really enjoyed this a great deal. I had been looking for something ever since to fill in the many gaps and answer the many questions I had about church and my faith’; ‘More knowledge about the Catholic Church and Tradition’; ‘A broader and deeper understanding of the faith of the church’; ‘A greater understanding of the Bible and the truths of the Catholic Church and more of a communication with other people in the Church’; ‘A better understanding of the Church and my faith’; ‘Faith and love of Church History’.

2 specifically referred to rituals and traditions: ‘Greater knowledge of why I believe, better understanding of the rituals and traditions, affirmation that it is alright to believe’; ‘A new understanding of rituals and traditions’.

6 wanted a more general understanding of faith: ‘I wanted to increase my knowledge of my faith’; ‘to put all the pieces of the puzzles of my faith together’; ‘I wanted a deeper understanding of the origins and content of my faith’; ‘Insight/understanding of Christianity’; ‘Theological exploration, intellectual stimulation, better understanding of faith itself’.

3 wanted knowledge to aid them in ministry: ‘Knowledge to help in my catechetical and sacramental program work. How to correctly answer questions presented by parents. An overall knowledge of the scriptures, and a realization of how little I know’; ‘A deeper understanding/knowledge of my faith and how I could use this in whatever ministry I was to find myself’; ‘To know more about my Faith/Church and how to “evangelize” more effectively’.

2 respondents identified scripture specifically: ‘More knowledge of scripture mainly’; ‘Deeper understanding of scripture and theology’; ‘A passionate love of the Old Testament’.

4 expressed more general hopes for knowledge: ‘Knowledge and confidence’; ‘To learn more’; ‘Time to ponder ‘the big questions’ of life’; ‘Something for myself outside the home (an interest) community other than family, church, prayer group, friends’.

TO GROW IN FAITH

16 Responses expressed a hope and desire to grow in faith: ‘Simply to grow in my faith understanding. I felt ‘stuck’ with a notion of a stern judgmental God’; ‘Find out where I was on the journey’; ‘Faith development’; ‘To develop a close relationship with Jesus. To put all the pieces of the puzzle of my faith together’; ‘Deepening of my personal relationship with God, as Trinity’; ‘A deepening of my faith, I had no idea what I wanted when I joined the class, I have overcome self-doubt, have had to slow down and take a close look at myself and others, to accept others as I wish to be accepted, in every area of my life’.

‘A belief in Faith and Hope and Jesus and it’s okay to think and question and explore’; ‘Personal growth, a greater understanding of where I have come from (a developing ability to work from the heart)’; ‘My first aim was to strengthen my heart. I was asking a lot of questions. I had uncertainties about the Church and where it was going’; ‘A greater sense and trust of myself, my gifts, my abilities, my weaknesses. A better understanding of my personal faith’; ‘A mature appreciation of my faith, an update from high school ideas. A closer walk with Jesus in many ways’; ‘A deeper understanding of my faith—a clarification of what I really believe and why I believe it’; ‘A deepening of my faith and if it led to more, that I would be open to it’; ‘To deepen my own faith and my understanding of my faith which in turn will influence the life I lead’; ‘Greater Faith development’; ‘Deepen my spirituality, get to know Jesus better’.

6 Respondents emphasized faith development and connected it with ministry and participation in the faith community: ‘An increase in faith, and a deeper relationship with God. Flowing on from that, improved skills in serving my faith community and the wider church’; ‘To nourish my faith and understand more. To find way(s) to work in ministry’; ‘Faith development, deeper knowledge of church/background procedures’; ‘Basically to explore my own faith in the company of others open to study and change. Also to equip myself to be a more serious contributor to parish life’; ‘A deeper encounter with the God of the scriptures and support in my role as parish pastoral associate’; ‘An understanding of the desire from within, formation and faith education (not necessarily academic) which would support my faith and ministry’.

5 respondents connected their faith development and the desire to understand the Catholic tradition: ‘A better understanding of the Catholic Faith and a new way of looking at my own faith journey’; ‘A better understanding of my faith and development of my prayer life’; ‘A better and deeper understanding of the Church, “its traditions”, its history and my own growth in faith/spirituality’; ‘A challenging and stimulating course in faith formation and tradition’; ‘An appreciation of my Catholic heritage, and a growth in my own faith’.

MINISTRY OUTCOMES

5 Respondents connected the course with their hopes for ministry: ‘Improved skills in serving my faith community and the wider church’; ‘To find way(s) to work in ministry’; ‘To equip myself to be a more serious contributor to parish life’; ‘The opportunity to finish and maybe obtain paid work within the church’; ‘An understanding/approach towards Parish ministry that was shared with other parishioners doing the course. I wanted us to be able to work together to build parish connections coming from the same educational base’.

GREATER CONFIDENCE

4 Respondents hoped to feel more confident: ‘What I wanted out of the course was more confidence in what I could give of myself to the church’; ‘Knowledge and confidence’ (x 2); ‘I guess I went to the course looking forward to what it had to offer. Being already in ministry, I felt it was an opportunity to become more professional and therefore more confident’.

FAITH COMMUNITY

4 Respondents considered study a faith community to be important to their experience: ‘Basically to explore my own faith in the company of others open to study and change’; ‘more of a communication with other people in the church’; ‘Our relationship to God thro Jesus and the workings of the Holy Spirit, how the church as a community can fulfil this’; ‘A way of making sense of my life. Knowledge, friendship, love and acceptance’; ‘hopefully from being somewhat on the outside, on the fringes, to being part of something. Sadly it hasn’t happened yet’.

EXPERIENCE OF RENEWAL

3 Respondents indicated the importance of experiencing a sense of renewal as an outcome of the course: ‘I suppose it was a case of the “old wineskin” that had dried out being replaced by a “new wineskin” and “new wine”.’; ‘It’s a bit hard to remember now. I think I wanted to continue to be enthused for life through the focus of Catholic ‘ologies’; ‘An updating of where the church now stands in the modern world and what Vatican 11 had meant to the church and changes had been implemented’.

TO FIND MY PLACE

2 Respondents considered this to be their hope: ‘I wanted to know what I had to offer within these structures, as a female with female spirituality and insights’; ‘An opportunity to think about where I am going in the church’.

FOR SOME IT WAS UNDEFINED

‘I wanted to stop people telling me I should do the course. After the 4th person suggested I do the course I thought God was trying to tell me something’; ‘I was unsure. I just wanted to do it’; ‘Moved by the spirit to attend I left it to the spirit to give me whatever was intended’; ‘Nothing in particular. I just did it because it was there’.

Question 7:

Did you get what you wanted from the course?

68% of respondents indicated unequivocally that they ‘got what they wanted’ from the course.

11% of respondents indicated that they ‘got what they wanted’ with some qualification.

UNEQUIVOCAL ‘YES’

‘Yes, I got it and much more, I feel it saved my belief in the Catholic faith by understanding Christianity. It ended the darkness of the soul for me, It gave me hope.’

‘Yes. We got encouragement. Stimulation. Discussion and a feeling that our faith is a living, growing, sharing experience.’

‘Yes. It is very important for my faith and my life because Holy God is leader of my life. It is most important to know who I must keep faithful with’.

‘Yes! I have to some degree become more open to “THE Word”.’

‘Yes, I receive it through my perseverance in prayer and faith blessed by God. The course brought me the understanding I need to find this.’

‘Yes. I can speak and guide with confidence. I have new friendships including the teachers! I miss the nights out!’

‘Yes, plenty of good up-to-date material’.

‘Yes, sometimes not at the time of study but when I heard God speak to me, understanding occurred.’

‘Yes, I have found my first year one of personal growth and a deepening of faith in the Holy Trinity. Knowing God had directed my footsteps along the path’.

‘Yes, the camaraderie and a sense of community that developed in the group was terrific’.

‘Yes I did. I believe that the course provided a broad overview of what is relevant for Christian formation and ministry’.

‘Yes, I feel I have more understanding and background. I am more a member of the community. Deeper knowledge of Bible, Vat 11 etc.’

‘Yes, I believe I did. I certainly feel more empowered to offer myself and my gifts to the community’.

‘I was very fulfilled. Loved it all’.

‘Yes. I have a deepening of knowledge, faith, love and appreciation of parish life and parishioners. I ‘minister’ with the 30+people I meet daily and enjoy being ministered to!’

'Yes'.

'Yes, I feel my personal faith is stronger as a result of this course-I received knowledge & information & more importantly that knowledge led to a deepening of my personal relationship with God'.

'Yes, I wasn't really interested in 'professional' parish ministry & it confirmed that idea but what I wanted I got.'

'Yes, I am better and more assertive in my own life.'

'Yes, as it deepened my faith & allowed me to be a person in my own right and prayerful.'

'Yes'.

'Yes, I did, in an environment where not only could I learn from the lecturers, but also from the participants. I really enjoyed the opportunities we were given for shared discussion'.

'Yes! I felt small embers that were burning in me-continued to be refueled until I had a warm glowing fire'.

'Yes'.

'I did get it. I learn more from the readings at Mass and also the prayers at Mass and I am more at ease with the other people at Mass'.

'Yes, at the end of the course when asked to share what the course had meant for me my response was that I had come to a greater sense of God's love for me'.

'Yes I did. I now feel quite well informed and I know that if I should need further information on resources I would know where to go'.

'Yes, doing the course helped me considerably with the ministry work I was already doing as a Pastoral Associate'.

'The course was challenging, so I believe I got much more than I hoped for'.

'Yes, I know/feel "faith" needs "feeling" so that continues to reach new deep growth'.

'Yes and from the experience am more relaxed about personal and family issues'.

'Yes. I found all material and instructors input very enlightening. Debating the various sections with other students very satisfying.

'Yes. Holding the course in our parish meant that the majority of participants were from the parish. Some were already working as Pastoral Associates or involved in running Parish activities. The course heightened our awareness of direction to take, the skills of others and the value of working as a team.'

'Yes definitely. The course laid the foundation for spiritual growth. God did the rest.'

'Yes, I got all I wanted and so much more. Most of all I learnt about me'.

'I was flabbergasted by the scripture unit, the lecturer, Ellen, a National Treasure I believe. I actually got a lot more. Liturgy, Prayer, Christology, Moral Theology being the big items for me. I found most of the course of interest.'

'Yes. To a greater extent than I ever expected. Thank you'.

A QUALIFIED 'YES'

'Yes, in proportion to my efforts, as well as the contribution of staff and participants'.

'Yes, but I wish it could have been accredited for further study. For participants to commit time and money and then to not have the course as relevant outside the Diocese is disappointing'.

'Absolutely, but there is still more to learn. I believe learning & Faith Formation are ongoing till one dies'.

'My faith and understanding has been nourished but I still have not found my place in the Church and am still seeking this out.'

'I am getting it. It's a slow process (or I'm a slow learner!).

'Generally yes. 'Pondering' less.'

'So far, but see PP with power and veto where he not agree'.

'Yes but still looking for ways to put it into practice in the meantime the course has definitely helped me in my work at the parish'.

'I feel I have, to some extent, anyway. Still have problems with the Christian community aspect where I feel that some other Christian churches are more community conscious than the Catholic church members. I am not much of a community man anyway, which doesn't help.'

'Mostly yes'.

'Yes, but at times I felt more time on some units was necessary, or availability of some extension of the unit (at that time) somewhere in the diocese/pastoral region/diocese.'

'Yes. Still have a lot of reading to catch up on'.

A 'NO' RESPONSE

'No! I got a whole lot more than I bargained for! If I'd realized what was going to happen to me I would probably have said 'too hard', forget it!

'No. Course not complete!.

'Without wanting to sound arrogant, I had undertaken many years of spiritual growth and development and found much of the early work repetitive, except scripture'.

'No. I know it had a lot to do with what I could see and how I had difficulty coping with others' agendas. I did try but sadly couldn't get past it'.

REFLECTIVE COMMENTS

'I feel more confident it's where God wants me at the moment'.

'The idiom or realization of a God of Mercy and Compassion was liberating for me and helps me live and love in this modern world as a more compassionate person and hopefully as a true disciple of Jesus'.

'I believe that there was growth. There were lessons on various aspects of the Church, history, importance of prayer, the books of the Bible, divinity &v humanity of Jesus etc etc, that come to mind at various times and provide answers to my questions'.

'As I progress in this course I am experiencing a renewal of faith and a greater commitment to my life an role as a Catholic church member.'

'Such seeds are not precise and not confined to a time factor'.

'The course certainly opened my eyes to the fact that the church needs to change in some ways to be progressive in its communion for people'.

'I feel confident it's where God wants me at the moment'.

'Faith is deeper now and love of Church and a better understanding of the history of Church and why certain things are done'.

'By the detailed study of OT texts, the contribution of the prophets, the significance of the story of the Exodus experience leading up to the coming of the Messiah.'

Question 8: What should be done differently?

66% of respondents indicated some change would be beneficial

34% indicated no change: Responses varied from 'blank'; 'no comment'; 'I don't know'; 'I'm sorry. I have no idea'; 'I loved every unit'; 'I was very happy with the course', to 'It's great as it is'.

SUGGESTIONS ABOUT COURSE STRUCTURE AND TEACHING

8 comments suggested more group discussion. Responses included: 'maybe more discussion time'; 'information can be integrated better by group sharing of perspectives and difficulties'; 'I felt more group work would have been helpful'; 'more opportunity for questions and concerns to be aired in class'; 'more discussion time during class'; 'as far as possible teaching should be in tutorial fashion rather than lecture or school lesson style'; 'I have been fortunate to be part of a very small course group and a positive of this has been fairly regular group discussions. I wonder if in larger groups there is time for this, which I have found a great way of exploring ideas'; 'not being an educator I can't offer a suggestion but is there some way that participants who continually ask questions and discuss issues during the presentation of a subject can have another forum for doing so?'

5 comments were concerned with the large amount of information covered. Responses included: 'Less information. Too much overkill and can't be digested'; 'Less information and more personal engagement'; 'more prayer time/sharing' course is focused on content, more about feelings to be explored'; 'the volume of reading...I did think we were going too fast at times (in 1st yr), I would have benefited from more "digestion" time'; 'possibly not squeeze in so much information in each night'.

4 comments were about the heavy reading requirement: 'I had difficulty keeping up with the reading required, perhaps assistance through summary of the more obscure writers'; 'cull many of the readings that are presented as necessary reading'; 'highlight the readings, working full time makes all the readings difficult to complete'; 'less reading material'.

Various comments were made on course content: 'I think an extra year on scripture would be good'; 'I found "liturgy" too much and too involved for the time we had'; 'I was surprised the course did not give us more on the Sacred Feminine especially when taught by female religious'; 'stages of faith/faith development just didn't get with my understanding especially in the Australian situation'; 'more time given to Moral Theology as this is where the questions are for today'; 'grief should have been a separate course. It was too rushed and of very little help to me'; 'more time should be given to the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures'; 'I could have done without 4 weeks on Faith Development, maybe two. I thought it was a peculiar start to the course. Too much psychological theory'; 'introduce Fr Richard Rohr to the course – great teacher/critic of Catholicism+scripture+global picture of faith'; 'I thought there was a little too much time on Church History, Education and Communication. I thought more time could have been spent on my favorite topics (Scripture, Liturgy. Moral Theology)! That's the height of selfishness eh!'; 'Nothing really, given the time constraints etc. I'd love to choose to do certain units in much more depth rather than a general overview'.

SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO MINISTRY AND BEYOND

9 commented on the practicum/parish ministry: ‘ the reinstatement of the practicum, if possible’; ‘the practicum perhaps needs to be more formalized e.g. place students in a parish with a Pastoral Associate’; ‘if we are going to be about “Pastoral Ministry” we need to know which direction the priests are going in, at the moment I feel lost in it all’; ‘I don’t see anything I would do differently, except the place the Practicum plays in the course’; ‘I would like to see TWEC arrange placements and provide education and support in the ministry/practicum component’; ‘more co-operation from the priests and more acknowledgement that through doing this course we could be more involved in the parish’; ‘the practicum, though I was the first group through, it may have changed since then. While I enjoyed the guest speakers who came along very much, on the whole I did not enjoy this part of the course and it was a real effort to see it through to the finish’; ‘ the practicum aspect seems to be unsatisfactory and even though this is the responsibility of the priests and the parishes rather than TWEC maybe communication between both might help’; ‘For me a unit on our giftedness/talents in the last year before we did practicum. The practicum for mw was disappointing, lacking in support and guidance and direction. Had I not been a self motivated, empowered person this would have been a waste of time.’

5 commented on course accreditation/further study: ‘ Is there any way that people in the diocese could be offered say, a degree in Theology in the diocese other than by correspondence or through CIS?’; ‘(course) should count as year 1 in a theology degree’; ‘perhaps refresher courses in the future’; ‘Probably the course was fine for many who had not undertaken this work before. I guess it ahs challenged me to try some more formal study after we finish our volunteer work’; ‘The course should be given accreditation towards further study e.g. Beginning Theology is part of a course at Brisbane Institute but does not appear to cover units to the same depth as the CFMC’.

ABOUT THE TEACHERS

‘I have been satisfied with the way the Sisters have taught the course & and very thankful for the way they have helped each of us develop our personal faith and the friendship we have developed with our fellow classmates’; ‘all of the instructors were thought provoking and challenging in their sessions’; ‘I was glad I did the course and thank TWEC and the presenters for giving us this opportunity’.

GENERAL COMMENTS

‘Listen to what people are saying, love one another as God loves us respect people where they are at’.

‘I would have finished at 9pm, maybe started at 6pm with a communal meal ‘til 6.30pm’, ‘mentors perhaps, three monthly’,

‘before the course I would not have been able to fill this form in “like a conversation”, I would have been stilted, formal and “by the book”.’

‘I wish I had similar courses much earlier in my life’.

'I feel the course helped my faith development. I had no pretensions to ministry or really faith development'.

'Decide who the course is aimed at and what this course could lead to. I felt this hadn't really been thought through carefully enough and that consequently many people dropped out as it was trying to be something for everyone'.

'It is difficult to say. The course served a certain purpose, which it fulfilled, but the 'Beginning Theology' gives more scope for learning from within'.

'to have someone from day 1 monitoring the whole GROUP experience (& it certainly was an experience) to ensure participants grow in their human awareness through consciously attending to maintenance as well as getting the "job done", and at least be respectful of one another!'

Christian Formation and Ministry Review

STAFF GATHERINGS

PURPOSE:

to provide opportunities for staff to share

- something of their own involvement in TWEC,
- elements of the program considered to be essential and valuable,
- aspects that are challenging or needing further reflection or development,
- the place of the program in the overall Diocesan Pastoral Plan,
- future possibilities.

TIMETABLE

WEDNESDAY 11 MAY

11:00	Introduction to the Centre and program (Colleen)
12:30	Lunch
2:00 – 4:00	Availability to staff
4:00 Patricia	Afternoon Tea and conversation with Bridgette and Patricia
6:00	Dinner and conversation Ellen, Virginia, Louise, Colleen, Lynette, Pat

THURSDAY 12 MAY

9:30	Feedback of conversation to date
	Reflection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which feedback resonates• Themes coming through strongly• Gaps• Possible futures

MINUTES

MEETING OF FOCUS GROUP

Gleeson Room, Diocesan Offices, Hamilton. 17 June 2005

Participants:

Congregational Leadership: Christine O'Connor rsj
TWEC Board: Colleen Carney rsj; Patricia Healion rsm.
Diocese: Christine Cavenagh; Jeannine French rsj.
Staff: Virginia Bourke rsj; Ellen Royan rsj.
Student: Therese Douglas; Dennis Graham; Laurel Movigliatti.
Parish: Reg Howard SSC.
Scribes: Review Steering Committee: Mary Ringstad; Moira Gordon.
Facilitator: Jan Barnett rsj

Roles:

Welcome: Mary Ringstad
Introductions:
Opening Prayer: Jan Barnett
Summary of Student Survey Results: Moira Gordon
Summary Documents from Meeting with Staff, the Bishop, Practicum Team

Facilitation:

A word or a phrase that summarises for you all of the documents?

Enthusiasm
Encouraging
High value
Hope for the future
Preparation for ministry in new and emerging Church
Both exciting and challenging at once
There is an unfinishedness about it
Differing perspectives in there
Richness

Coming as yourself, have a look at what is coming through strongly?

Have you noticed similarities or differences in what's coming through?

Is there a prophetic word coming through?

Not just an exercise in patting ourselves on the back.

What seems to be coming through strongly in terms of affirmation?

- Obviously meeting needs.
- Life-giving.

- Provides opportunities in so many ways for different people, from different backgrounds, e.g., someone at home with children, who didn't know their potential when came to the class.
- Personal enrichment, faith development, and giftedness.
- A fruition – staff, years ago, stepped out and now the students are benefiting from that
- Some sort of universal appeal – to different ages, educational backgrounds, etc. - can touch people no matter where they are in that spectrum.
- Geographically provides an opportunity people can't find anywhere else.
- Clash in parishes is a positive – there's a big change happening there in the parish.
- Affirms an initiative taken in the Diocese but also by people who have taken it up – a first base good, but also a possibility for a second base to go on from it.

What similarities / differences do you see in the spectrum of the reports?

- Strong sense of personal faith development and journey and individual perspective and then moving out to ministry [from students]. And, looking at the Bishop – a broader perspective, more looking out. Is there a tension there?
- A fracture between the Course as given and how people outside, e.g., parishes, saw it. People come from parishes and have to go to other areas from practicum experience – links are not being made – there is a fracture down the track.
- That fracturing was factored in, in the way the Course began – for people coming for personal development and also for ministry – that not communicated well.
- Fracture coming from Practicum.
- Ideal world and real world incompatibility - this is true of any course when the fruit of the course is going to be put into practice.
- A problem with the parish priest not understanding what the Course is doing – looking for marks – asking: 'did you get a distinction?'
- Asked people in the parish: 'What's TWEC?' Answer: 'something that happens in Lochinvar'. With 3 men ordained last Christmas and new people like Fr Howard, or Wayne Tinsey [CEO of the Catholic Schools Office] coming in to the Diocese, should there be an information kit to go to people in leadership positions as they come into the Diocese?
- In a way, the Practicum is an issue – not part of the TWEC Course yet part of what the Bishop has in mind, and an incomplete picture of the Practicum in the Review – yet it's effect on us [? students ?] is part of the Review.
- Practicum, from student's perspective, is part of the student's experience of the Course.

[The Review is 'of the Course' – yet there is a Diocesan expectation ... – an anomalous situation. Yet, it [people going on to the Practicum] is part of the outcome of the Course – so it's part [of the review] although it's not!]

Looking at that issue, is there something you need to say?

- Having a sense that the Practicum has to be parish based is too myopic. Lots of ministries go across parishes.
- Because [the Practicum] is just contained within parishes, don't get exposure to this [broader ministries] – suggest Practicum be expanded to take in a more diverse range of ministries.

- ‘Up to the Practicum, I was thinking I would work as a Pastoral Associate, but the time and prayer that the Practicum gave me showed this is not where I was being called’.
- people finish the Course on a high - need something to extend this to be more practical as well as getting space & time to ‘test’ it [? call to a particular type of ministry ?]
- The Board has a concern that the Practicum is not being given at this time.
- Some of the dilemma comes about because of how construe what adult education , faith education, is being set up. With adult education, can’t have a fixed end point – it has to be open-ended so the text of the course become the people themselves. But when you look now, we don’t have a lot of people as Pastoral Associates, but we do have ex-students doing lots other things, and acting in the capacity but not formally.
- As an example, the Diocesan Assembly was almost a TWEC reunion, with so many graduates as parish representatives, representing diocesan organisations, etc.
- But saying all that, is still not doing the ministry preparation.
- Things have changed – only about 3 years ago the Bishop started saying ‘Pastoral Associates’ and the ministry concept became narrowed.
- Also, initially, the Pastoral Associates Association wanted all TWEC people in, they then started to narrow it down – is this driven by ‘*real politic*’ and the needs of the Diocese at the time?

2 recommendations coming through:

- i) ***break the nexus between Practicum and parish***
- ii) ***initiate discussions with the Diocese regarding the future of the course and its relationship with other courses and bodies involved in adult faith education.***

Do you have a prophetic word to put into this discussion?

- Not just a gap between the Course and Practicum, but between people wanting to be ‘wowed’ by the Course and then putting it into a practical application. Picking up on what comes through in the survey: help people to be more active in groups; transfer leanings into other areas; offer more skills in having the confidence to investigate ... These comments suggest still in ‘jug-to-mug’ education mode rather than facilitative learning – ‘the people are the text’.
- Because the Course is open to such a broad spectrum, the kind of investigative learning could expect of teachers, doctors, etc is not relevant to all the people doing the Course.
- Like kids at Uni, who also don’t transfer skills from one area to another – some have the capacity to transfer, others take it in narrower focus.

[Perhaps there need to be a greater emphasis on facilitative, investigative learning]

- Something back to front in the process [of people doing the Course and then coming to the parish saying interested in ministry] – rather parish commissions someone to prepare for a ministry in the parish – this should come from the parish community.

Let's look at this issue: is it something the parish commissions or an individual chooses?

Jan noted the complexity of the whole thing.

So many issues to discuss! Is there an area you want to have on the table – in addition to the Practicum, the Course, the interrelations; *the issue stated just before we broke for tea.*

Any other?

- How this sits into the Diocesan situation and where that is going.
- Throughout all this – could involve groups more within the Course – group dynamics as a way of facilitating learning and dealing with adults, people who bring a lot of resources, and lead to self-development.
- Some sense of ecumenism – this can be the reality particularly in remote areas, e.g., ‘covenanting’ by the National Council of Churches.

This raised relations with broader agendas – Diocesan Plan and Ecumenical Movement

- Ongoing viability of TWEC – having the staff to continue.
- Question: When talking about ecumenism, do you mean courses in this or opening up the Course to other groups [than Catholics]? Response: In some parishes there are no clergy, and it is a group of people from all the churches who run things.

Also need to look at the open-ended comments from the survey

From the research, what is coming through in this area and is there a prophetic word?

- Aware of clash in parishes – people are prepared, come back to their parish, and there's no place for them. If commissioned by people from their area [and sent to do the Course], would be a place, because this has been recognised before went [to do the Course].
- Put this into context – my Mass community is gone – combining parishes makes it really difficult to discern because those connections, which were there within the community, are no longer there.
- If someone comes along saying ‘I've done the Course and here I am’, I [the priest] am going to say ‘well, congratulations, that's nice’ If someone comes saying ‘have done the Course and think I can do ...’, I'm much happier meeting them. Preparing for this meeting set me thinking about people in my parish. Have previously dealt with information coming in about the Course in a general way, put it on notice boards, spoken from pulpit, etc, but since contacted for this review have started thinking: ‘that person would be good to do the Course ...’ Parishes should be more proactive, and if a person expects to work in some parish, they need to talk this through at some stage in the Course [with the PP].
- With priests moving on, this needs to be more than a matter of personality, so it is wider than the parish.
- Can also have people who think they would be good at something and others would not see them as good for this!

- Have always had the thing in the Course of people just coming along and then thinking will do something [in ministry] later on – the tension has always been there.
- At parish / region, might get a better spread of people coming into the Course by being called forth. Not getting a good cross-section now (e.g., younger people not coming into the Course).

Question a little further, the perspective of personal choice. Is there a sense there should be more ‘calling forth’?

- For some people, personal choice is all have at the moment.
- Hearing from people of a personal hunger and it’s an important factor with adult education.
- Personal choice is always important [? as a motivator for doing the Course].
- People need a level of maturity before the questions are strong enough in their life to commit to doing a course like this.
- In earlier years, people are living their life – after forty the questions are coming up and people look for things. But there is a need for us to look at the under 40’s and what their needs are, too.
- Maybe this is a matter of time-tabling – the younger are busy with family.
- This is where one-off courses work. People will come to courses relevant to their children.
- Maybe let the TWEC Course stand as it is and have something beyond this to prepare for more formal ministry – Practicum +++
- Useful to separate the two.
- If people want to, can go on.
- For last couple of years there has been no one discerning with the Practicum. In earlier years the Bishop met with people interested in going on. People are coming in because had a really good experience with the Course and have no idea of going into ministry. Would like to see people doing Practicum when ready to go into ministry.
- Ministry needs to be a source of reflection for a Practicum. The CFMC still needs to be open tot but not responsible for ministry.
- If divided it [the Course] that way, it could still include more practical or ministry aspects in the Course.
- Still, when talking about ministry in the Diocese, talking about a restricted sense of ministry.

Hearing there could be sometimes ‘personal choice’, sometimes ‘called forth’ – from this, there is more work to be done so that mechanisms are put in place to assist that process.

Also, break the nexus between the Course and Practicum so the Practicum is where people called forth for ministry in the Diocese, are.

[Other issues?]

- Could there be any dovetailing with other courses?
- Doing a Master of Theology subsequently [after the Course], there was no formal credit given, but the Course has prepared well for the Masters course, and wouldn’t have been ready to tackle it without having done the Course.

- At one stage the TWEC team did look at getting recognition for the Course for further education, but the person doing so got sick and that's where it was left.
- This should be investigated further. Things have changed since then. Cf. the Broken Bay course - there is recognition given for this, and ours is a higher course ...
- Also a question of cost – have spent money doing this Course, and then could not afford to go on and face the full cost of another course.
- Is this an issues to take to the Diocesan Pastoral Council?

Relation of the Course to the Diocesan situation

- This has been raised and hope people will take it up.
- Presenting a reflection of what is happening, not with extensive knowledge: feel like we are treading water, waiting for the Diocese to get its acts together and put money and effort into adult education in the diocese – this is what people want and hope for, some kind of Adult Institute – covering TWEC, Beginning Theology, Stepping Stones, individual programs. People need to be able to come to a central point to look for what's available, 'how can I explore ...', etc.
- Fr Ed Nixon CSsR has been nominated to head a Committee re this – what can we do? Contribute the results of this review!
- Question: is there overlap between Beginning Theology and TWEC? Answer: both are preparing in a faith context – not aware of movement from Beginning Theology to TWEC. Q.: are they different enough? A.: Yes – Beginning Theology is at an introductory level. Q.: do the 2 courses cover the same area? A.: basically the same but, e.g., TWEC looks more deeply at liturgy. Q.: is there room for Beginning Theology being the 1st year of a TWEC program? A.: it certainly is an introduction.
- What hasn't surfaced is, while saying there is a great thirst and hunger, have been stretching it in the last few years to get numbers for the Course – it this because pitching it at too high a level? Hunger and Course not coming together?
- Is there duplication? Any connection / difference between the way Beginning Theology is seen and the bit about not getting credentials by way of a Distinction?
- If Beginning Theology was a prerequisite, would this cut out people who had not written anything for 40 years [because it is distance learning not face-to-face]?
- This comes back to the question of some kind of recognition for the TWEC Course – people; who commit to a 3-year course of study want a piece of paper giving credit towards something else.

Implicit question here – are the rewards for the Course commensurate with what is put into it – get a piece of paper - does this reflect the true value of what people have studied?

- When you go to the PP, need a piece of paper that says clearly what you have done / studied – they don't know what you've done – something that says you've attended for 16 hours doesn't say anything.
- When you go to the PP, he would be looking more at making an assessment of the person and their suitability.
- If going to look at people going into ministry in parishes, have to look at what parishes need.
- All these questions are ones for Diocesan discernment rather than TWEC.

Comment on broadening beyond the Diocese to look at ecumenical issues

- A back burner, even though important.
- Trying to cope with 'within the Diocese' issues first.
- Need to set own house in order before looking to extend to other churches.
- Q.: has the Course been offered to people in other Churches? A.: No – have seen it as within our community.

Would there be value in raising this for ongoing consideration?

- To do so changes the whole thing – if had a ecumenical context it would be a radical change.

Ongoing viability of TWEC [? CF & M Course ?] – this has been raised mainly by the staff

- Hope if something happens in the Diocese to establish a wider education facility, this will give an extension of life to TWEC. But need to be doing something, if the Course is worth going on, need to be doing something to facilitate it going on – to stimulate, this with people in the Diocese.
- If Diocese did its own discernment and came up with an active plan, TWEC personnel might feed into this, and not have to administer it.
- If not, will be like the Practicum, and go into abeyance.
- Intention is to keep going as long as possible.
- Keep awareness that in the process, you are forming people, which helps the Diocese. An important point, which need to be made.

Group Dynamics within the Course – comments have been made about this. Anything further?

- See the survey results – the group work question, volume of work question. There are examples in the Course of people wanting to explore and suppressing this to get on with the information.
- Practicum should not just be an adjunct.
- People doing this [conducting the Practicum ?] would need to talk to the TWEC people and there be some material moved.
- TWEC Course just 'Christian Formation' and the other course as 'Ministry.
- This avoids dual motivation.
- Example of a unit which might be moved could be the Ministry unit.

Reflective Responses

Highlights: Mary Ringstad

Q4 – integration of learning with experience of church.

What to do next

Specific concerns about Church.

Impressed with how articulate people are about issues, including what has come out about Spiritual Direction – those who took it on are the ones able to discern.

What would be your strongest recommendation?

- Important that we are closely tied in with what's happening in the Diocese.
- Openness to participation in Diocesan discernment which is coming and, in ourselves, an openness to let go a bit. So, a wider perspective than our own be heard. Haven't locked up the market.

- Stronger separation of Christian Formation and Ministry courses from Practicum and picking up the idea of taking aspects of ministry unit into the ministry/practicum, whatever this is called in the future.
- TWEC Course answers a communal church need and should continue and if necessary be enhanced.
- Revisiting the possibility of having the Course accredited in some way.
- Feel coordination important – things have changed since when TWEC started.
- Different kind of discernment when starting the Course, rather than the interview as it is now.
- Highlight what it is you are offering.
- Maybe it's not fair to assume that we will be given a fair hearing in the Diocesan process – it's a hope that won't just get a brush off. Is there a possibility that we won't be asked to contribute?
- Need to be proactive in collaboration with priests.

