

'Theological Reflection'

Input by Donal Harrington

Strong sense of mission coming across from the morning

- 'if we want things to stay the same, things are going to have to change'
- Not about 'trying harder'; more about a calmness in face of an unfamiliar future, so as to allow new ways to emerge
- The impression from the three presentations – new ways are possible, though it requires hard work

Some indications coming across about what 'mission' entails

- Starting from where people are at – e.g. 'don't start by talking about God' – looking at things from the other side – thinking about what parents might want
- Not being dominated by goals, such as getting people to mass (that may be later in the process) – it's more about finding ways to connect and seeing where that leads
- It's about the *human* experience that people have in the interaction – the quality of the human experience facilitates the *divine* experience
- Our language of 'pre-evangelisation, evangelisation, catechesis'... Would it be worth thinking through the process afresh, maybe new language would emerge?

What was coming across about skills and training?

- How little reference there was to 'catechists' etc
- The expertise need to connect with young parents/adults today is not the same as what is traditionally associated with terms such as 'catechist'
- Some of the skills that contributed to success were ones that were already there – e.g. communication/promotion skills; drawing on the Army; teachers' skills for working with children; music; digital technology.
- Also 'skills' in the sense of the qualities people bring to the processes – e.g. people who are 'thinkers'; young parents themselves.
- And the skills to unlock skills in others... In each of the three stories there was a 'professional' pastoral person who animated.
- Perhaps that says something about the kind of training needed, i.e. training people to accompany and empower others.
- Also, people to generate resources that can be used by others who might not have the skills to generate themselves.