

THE FUTURE OF OUR DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

It is now three years since I became the Bishop of Portsmouth. Over this time, I've been getting to know the patch.

We have 140 priests and 40 deacons and I spent the first 18 months on 'home' visits to spend time with each of our priests, and then with our deacons and their wives.

We have 95 parishes from Oxford in the north, across Reading east to Maidenhead, Windsor and Aldershot, then down through Newbury and Winchester to Portsmouth, Southampton and Bournemouth in the south, and over to the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands. I always say to other bishops that Portsmouth is not only the best diocese in England and Wales but also the largest – that is, if you include the sea-bed out to the Channel Islands! So 95 parishes: I have been working my way around them on pastoral visitation one weekend per month, sometimes two.

We also have 43 religious communities, including 3 new religious communities: The Marian Franciscan Friars in Gosport, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary Immaculate in Bridgemaury, and the Stella Matutina Sisters in Grayshott.

But over the last year or so - a great delight - I've been making brief visitations of our diocesan schools. We have 76 schools, of which 53 are academies or voluntary-aided, and 23 independents. I wanted to visit every school in order to get the flavour, but more importantly to support heads, staff, governors and chaplains in their work. The Trustees decision to convert over time our VA schools into academies is a major issue and the consultation on this continues. I'm very grateful to Deacon Stephen Morgan for being our Project Leader, and he will say a little more later this morning.

Since becoming Bishop, I have been directing everyone in the Diocese to the work of new evangelisation (NE). This has been the call of St. John Paul and Pope Benedict but I am also much inspired by the words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* 27:

“I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.

A renewal of structures [is needed] .. to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more .. open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth, and thus to elicit a positive response from all whom Jesus summons to friendship with Himself”.¹

¹ Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium. The Joy of the Gospel* (London, CTS: 2013). It was Pope John Paul II who famously called for the new evangelisation in 1983: “What we need is a new evangelisation, one that is new in its ardour, new in its methods and new in its expression:” cf. John Paul II ‘The Task of the Latin American Bishop’ in *Origins* 12 (March 24, 1983): 659-62. The occasion was a discourse to an assembly of CELAM in

Schools and parishes are the two principal agencies of the diocesan mission, and the call to NE has massive implications not only for our parishes but also for our schools: for school priorities, for heads and governors, for leadership and succession-planning, for staff development, for chaplains, for relations with parents and families, for the academy conversion programme, for the curriculum, for a renewed RE syllabus, and for links with parishes. The title of this talk is: “The Future of our Diocesan Schools”. I want to set forth a theological vision for our schools - or at least a renewed direction of travel. I want to express something of how I see the role of schools within the Diocese and how our schools might be even more effective agents of evangelisation. Indeed, I want to invite every school to develop its own strategy for evangelisation.²

Schools have a wide remit to society as well as to the Church. But forgive me here for focusing on the central aim of our schools: to make Jesus Christ better known and better loved, so that everyone in the school community might have life, and have it to the full (cf. John 10: 10). So in this first session, our context, later, practical elements.

1. Data

First, some general data. The ONS Census reports for England and Wales for 2001 and 2011 are revealing - here arranged in size of congregations:³

	2001		2011	
		Of population		Of population
Christians	42.08M	71.75%	33.2M	59.3%
Muslims	1.55M	2.97%	2.7M	4.8%
Hindus	0.552M	1.06%	0.817M	1.5%
Sikh	0.329M	0.63%	0.423M	0.8%
Jews	0.260M	0.50%	0.263M	0.5%
Buddhist	0.144M	0.28%	0.248M	0.4%
Other	0.150M	0.29%	0.240M	0.4%
No religion	9.1M	14.81%	14.1M	25.1%
<i>Not answered in census</i>	4.04M	7.71%	4.04M	7.2%
<i>Total population</i>	52.4M		56.1M	

There are three headlines here:

Port-au-Prince on 9th March 1983. Cf. R. Fisichella *The New Evangelisation: Responding to the Challenge of Indifference* (Leominster, Gracewing: 2012) 8f. It then became a recurrent theme of his preaching.

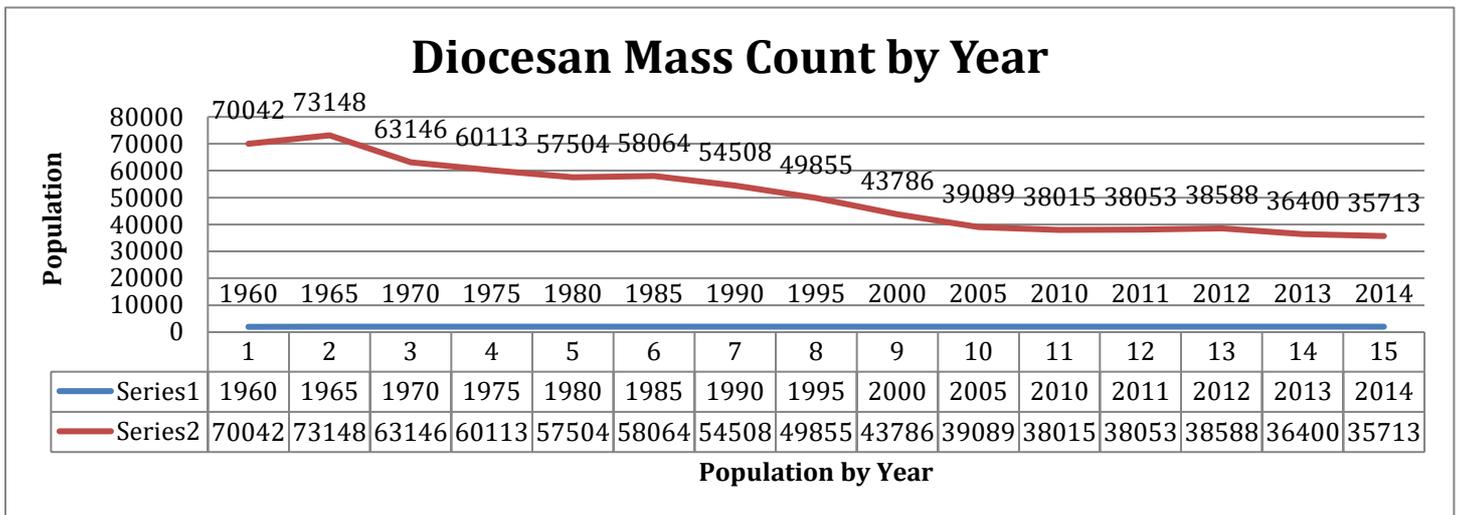
² Evangelisation (from ευαγγελιον ‘good news’ and ευαγγελιζομαι ‘to announce good news’) essentially means ‘spreading the Gospel,’ that is, proclaiming the *kerygma* of Christ’s death and resurrection, and its meaning and value for people today, for individuals, groups, institutions and cultures. Evangelisation has been a constant activity of the Church from the beginning; it originates with the missionary mandate of Christ Himself: “Go; make disciples of all the nations; baptise them ... and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you” (Mt 28: 19-20).

³ Source here: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt-religion.html> (November 2015)

- the decline of Christianity: from 72% to 59% which, if it continues, means that by 2019 and the end of this decade, Christians will be in a minority;
- the growth of Islam: from 3% to 5%, making Islam the fastest growing religious group in England and Wales; and
- the exponential growth of ‘nones’ (people of no religious affiliation): up from 15% in 2001 to 25%. A quarter of the population now says it has ‘no religion.’

There are some interesting local variations. Knowsley, Merseyside, has the highest proportion of Christians (81%) and Tower Hamlets the highest proportion of Muslims (35%, 7 times the average). Norwich has the highest proportion of ‘nones’ (42%). Apparently, the area around Havant and Portsmouth too have a lot of nones.

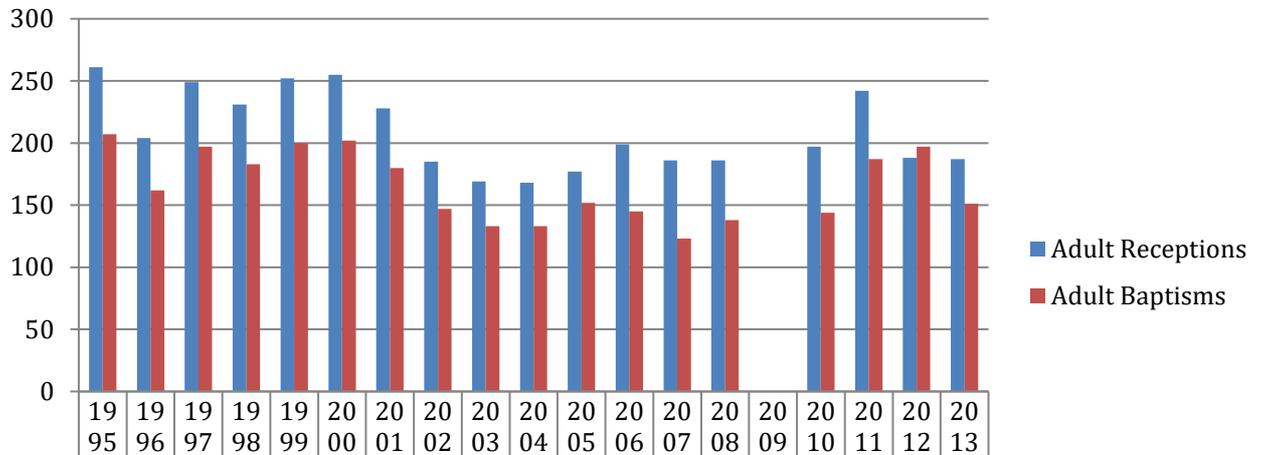
In England and Wales most Christians are Anglicans. Regular church attendance – defined as once a month, although attendance is notoriously difficult to measure reliably - is 1.6M attendees, about 2.8% of the population (1 in 30).⁴ So in England and Wales, there are huge numbers of ‘unchurched’ people, 29 out of every 30. Catholics constitute about 1 in 12 or 8% of population: 4.5M. In the Diocese of Portsmouth, the general population is 3.1M; this means 2.9M are unchurched. Of the 3.1M, 8% will be baptised Catholics: 248,000. Of these, 35,500 practice. Our practice rate is 14%. There are huge numbers of ‘inactive’ Catholics. 17 out of every 20 are inactive. In the Diocese, the practice rate has been plummeting. Over the last 25 years, attendance at Sunday Mass has shrunk from 54,500 to 35,500:



It is instructive to tabulate the trend for adult baptisms and receptions into the Church. In 2013, in the Diocese there were 180 receptions: i.e. about 2 persons per parish per year. It currently takes 200 parishioners to generate one new one.

⁴ Helpful here is the work of “British Religion in Numbers”: see <http://www.brin.ac.uk> (November 2015)

Adults Receptions and Adult Baptisms



■ Adult Receptions	261	204	249	231	252	255	228	185	169	168	177	199	186	186	0	197	242	188	187
■ Adult Baptisms	207	162	197	183	200	202	180	147	133	133	152	145	123	138	0	144	187	197	151

In Luke 18:8, Jesus asks: “When the Son of Man comes, will He find any faith on earth?” The challenge is enormous. Leaving aside religious minorities, most people in England and Wales are un-churched. Most Christians are non-churchgoing, and 85% of Catholics are inactive. Yet even these bare statistics mask the magnitude of the challenge. In our Diocese over the last 25 years, especially its urban centres, there has been a huge influx of immigrant groups such as Filipinos, Keralans and Poles. We might ask: Where now is the former Anglo-Irish constituency?

Statistics are helpful, yet in faith-matters, there are limits. Evangelisation is not about numbers. The Lord never promised full churches; if anything He seemed to envisage the Christian community as a small band. Yet the Church is incarnate and so numbers do have some significance both for the Church’s internal functioning and for its external mission. The question this morning is: How might schools play their part? How might the school play an appropriate part in the Church’s mission? How might the school, as an agency of the Diocese, be a more effective agent of evangelisation?

2. New Evangelisation

Christianity is not a religion of the book, be it the Bible, the *Catechism* or whatever. Nor is it based on doctrine, beliefs, the teachings of the Church. Nor is our faith based on a moral code of do’s and don’ts, practices and customs. Catholicism is first and foremost based on a Person, Jesus Christ, God the Son, on a personal relationship with Him in the communion of His Church, and on union through Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Here is the difference between the old evangelisation and *new* evangelisation (NE). The NE is not ecclesio-centric but Christo-centric. It’s not about ‘church’ but about Jesus Christ and making Him known and loved. It’s about the love of Jesus, a transforming encounter with Him. It’s about helping people hear Him call

them to be His disciple, about a life-long friendship with Him, within His Body the Church. Only then does everything else follow on: the Church's teachings, her glorious Tradition, the Bible, the moral codes by which we live and the charitable service we give to the poor. This is an attitudinal shift difficult for traditional Catholics to grasp. Indeed, arguably one of the main reasons why Mass attendance has declined, and why we have so few converts, is because we fail to focus on the one thing necessary, the Person and Love of Jesus Christ our Saviour. We fail to demonstrate how all our Catholic doctrine, life and worship intrinsically flows from Him and leads to Him.⁵

The Church exists to evangelise, Blessed Paul VI once said, to witness to Christ and the Gospel, to draw people into a life-changing relationship with Him and through Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit.⁶ This evangelisation is two-way, *ad intra* and *ad extra*, a life-long process of *ourselves* being evangelised and a life-long outreach to *others*. It is important to differentiate three elements or moments of evangelisation:

- (1) religious experience, i.e., the grace of Christ touching a person's heart, rousing them to faith; then
- (2) catechesis, i.e. RE and on-going formation in discipleship; and
- (3) sacramentalisation, i.e. receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation Penance/Eucharist, with insertion into the life of the Christian community.

These 3 moments (encounter, catechesis, sacraments), all God's grace, are like falling-in-love, getting engaged, marriage and family life.⁷ Typically, an enquirer has had a religious experience; next they receive catechesis; then at the Easter Vigil they receive the sacraments and are inserted into parish life. For many cradle Catholics these three moments are reversed: sacraments at birth, catechesis in childhood, when were they evangelised? Many are sacramentalised, even catechised, but poorly evangelised.

In outreach to the non-practising and outreach to the un-churched people of good will, the first moment (encounter and religious experience) is critical, especially when such people request prayers, blessings, sacraments or funeral liturgies from the parish or when from the school they seek admission and a Catholic education for their children. The key issue is how to rouse people to faith. Whilst entrusting everything to God's grace, we need to connect with their innate religious sense. We need to create the conditions – and to keep creating the conditions - in which they can encounter the Mystery of Christ and want the Life He offers. How do we help people of good will find God, experience the love of God, learn the art of praying, develop a personal-passionate friendship with Christ, or have a sense of being personally called to be His disciple? As Catholics, we have huge resources for this in two millennia of spiritual theology, the wisdom and lives of the saints, and a rich and diverse Tradition.

⁵ See S. Weddell *Forming Intentional Disciples* (Huntington, Our Sunday Visitor: 2012).

⁶ Paul VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in H. Denzinger *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (43rd Edition) ed. P. Hünermann (San Francisco, Ignatius Press: 2010) DH 4573

⁷ Fro more on this, see S. Hahn *Evangelizing Catholics: A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization* (Huntington, Our Sunday Visitor: 2014) especially 47-57.

In saying that NE not ecclesio-centric but Christo-centric, we mean its aim is not to enhance the institution of the Church, to fill the pews, to build up parishes or to enlist more helpers, say, to run the Children's Liturgy. Evangelisation is not a strategy or a programme; it's a Person, Jesus Christ.⁸ It is about meeting Him. It's about making Jesus Christ known and loved, spreading His teaching, attracting people to His Way of Life and building the Kingdom. The aim is not to build up missionary parishes or even missionary schools, but missionary people. As an agency of evangelisation, a school like a parish is not so much an end in itself, but a chaplaincy equipped with the resources needed effectively to communicate the Gospel.

People often say we are short of priests – we are. Yet the real challenge surely is not a shortage of priests but a shortage of *people*, people truly converted to Christ, who truly love Him and put Him first, who want to take real responsibility for their faith in spreading the Gospel. We need more people personally and passionately in love with Jesus Christ, formed in the Scriptures and worshipping Him in the Holy Eucharist. In this way, we will have abundant human resources for the challenge ahead.

Evangelisation always has a double intention. Its proximate goal is the individual, but its ultimate goal is to baptise culture.⁹ Christ calls individuals to follow Him, incorporating them into His Church, but the Church is meant to be a 'leaven in the dough' (Lk 13: 20-21). It is meant to permeate, guide and fulfil culture with Christian meanings and values, just as the Lord did for the Jewish culture. Now in evangelising contemporary British culture, there are four particular counter-positions. These skew people's attitudes, putting pressure on our schools and parishes. In our schools in general, and in the RE curriculum in particular, we need to tackle and to reverse:

- secularism, more exactly, the wrong type of secularism: a hard-core secularism that seeks to drive religion out of the public domain and to ring-fence it to the private. This is not freedom *of* religion but freedom *from* religion. Hard-core secularism is lethal to the ethos and character of our schools.
- secondly, scientism, the false philosophical claim that empirical science alone can yield facts and truths, whereas religion is just personal opinion. Scientism distorts knowledge and undermines ethics, and in our schools we need to demonstrate how faith and science collaborate for the human good.
- thirdly, relativism, the belief that each individual is the ultimate arbiter of what is right: "What's true for you is not for me." The weak and most vulnerable pay

⁸ In an Apostolic Letter from 2001 opening the millennium year 2000, Pope John Paul II said "we are ... not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and by the assurance he gives us: I am with you! It is not therefore a matter of inventing a 'new programme'." See John Paul II *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 29, text available online at www.vatican.va (November 2015).

⁹ This is strongly emphasised in the magisterium of the last three popes. John Paul II once said: the "greatest challenge of our age comes from a growing separation between faith and reason, between the Gospel and culture." See John Paul II *Inter Munera Academicarum* 2, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19990128_inter-munera-academicarum_en.html (November 2015)

the price for this emotional subjectivism. In school, we need to help pupils acquire sound and solid principles for moral decision-making.

- And fourthly, consumerism, a way of life that canonises economics. It leads to an over-consumption that damages the environment, and to unsustainable and unjust work-loads that damage the family and the person. Pope Francis tackles this in *Laudato Si* but in school we need to develop sound arguments that show how unregulated consumerism impairs human flourishing.

Evangelisation in Britain means engaging with these four ideologies: secularism, scientism, relativism and consumerism. These are commonly held positions, not least among the young, and our schools have a critical function in exposing them.

After the break, I want to move on to practical strategies. But at this point, I wish to prompt a brief round-table discussion with some feedback: As individuals and as schools, how do we reach out to the unchurched?

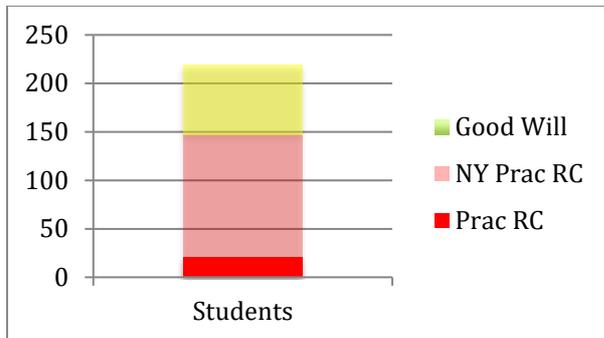
3. Developing an Evangelisation Strategy

Even the world considers teaching to be a vocation. But for a Christian, to be a teacher, a teacher of the young, is one of the noblest and most responsible vocations of all. To be a teacher is to be chosen by God to exercise the ministry of prophet. It's to imitate Jesus Christ, humanity's Priest, *Prophet* and Shepherd. In other words, you are teachers because God has called you to be teachers. And He calls you to act *in persona Christi*, in the Person of Christ the Prophet, proclaiming the Good News of salvation, showing the young the way to happiness. On another occasion, it would be good to explore further the vocation of teaching. But because teaching is a vocation in the Church, we can also say that every Catholic teacher is called to be a missionary, an agent of evangelisation. I hasten to add, of course, evangelising is not proselytising, indoctrinating, pressurising. We evangelise in that gentle, incarnational Catholic way: by our prayer, our life and personality, our attitudes, the things we do and say.

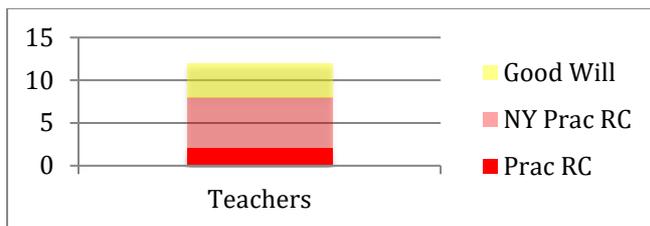
Our schools exist to support parents and carers in the education of their children, not least their religious education. But in light of the NE, we can be more specific. Our diocesan schools exist to support parents in forming their children as Eucharistically committed disciples, in love with Christ and the Gospel, filled with missionary zeal. In this regard, it would be good if every school had an agreement or covenant between school and home. Schools and parishes each evangelise in their own way but schools have unique opportunities since they comprise proportioned constituencies. In various ways our schools are 'tri-band.' They comprise practising Catholics (minority), not yet practising Catholics (the majority) and other Christians, people of other religions, those of no religion and others, all of whom desire the values and education the school offers. This tri-banding is not a hard and fast grouping but a rough categorisation for pastoral planning and it can also be seen in our teaching and support staff: practising Catholics, not yet practising Catholics and, let's call them, 'people of good will.'

I pause by the way at this point to thank and to value greatly the non-Catholic teachers who teach in our schools and all that they generously give to the life of our schools and the mission of the Church in our Diocese. We appreciate them enormously.

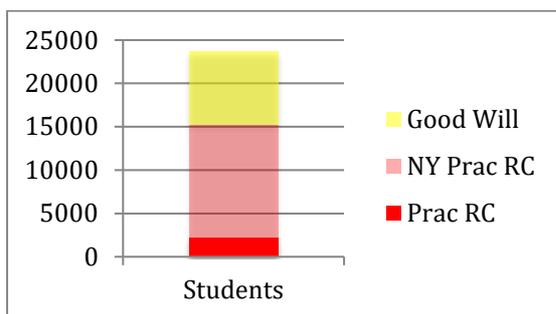
But a typical one-form entry primary school with 220 pupils might comprise, say, 67% Catholics, that is 147 of whom, statistically 14% practice, that is, 21. The school also has 73 pupils of ‘good will.’ It looks like this:



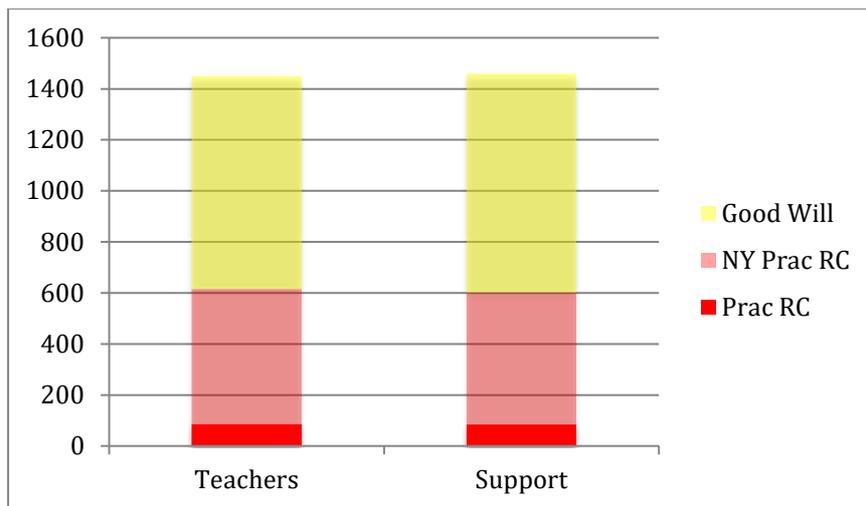
The school might typically have 12 teachers and support staff, 8 of whom are Catholics, with say, 2 practicing, and 4 other staff members, ‘people of good will’:



In diocesan VA schools and academies, there are more Catholic students than teachers but there are also wide variations. The total number of students in our schools is 23,750 of whom 64% (15,249) are Catholic and the other 36% people of good will:



The total number of teachers (excluding heads) in our VA schools and academies is 1,451 of whom 42% are Catholic, and the total number of support staff is 1,460 of whom 41% are Catholic. I am sure of course that the level of practice among teaching and support staff – here simply averaged at 14% - is actually much higher:



I do not have the figures to hand but our diocesan independent schools have fewer Catholic students and staff. There is much to learn from them, in that despite this many generate a strong Catholic ethos. But how we correlate this tri-band nature of our diocesan schools, determining the statistics in a given instance, yields important criteria for decision-making about the expansion of an existing school or the creation of a new one. We leave this however for another discussion.

The tri-band nature of our schools raises three questions:

- How is the school playing its part in the evangelisation of practising Catholics?
- How is the school playing its part in the evangelisation of not-yet practising Catholics?
- How is the school playing its part in the evangelisation of those of good will, particularly the unchurched?

I wish to encourage every school to develop its own evangelisation strategy and to encourage the development of reporting mechanisms on outreach to the different constituencies. The aim is to strengthen those of Eucharistic faith, to reach out to the not-yet-practising and to offer the Gospel to the unchurched people of good will. Here are six elements that might be considered, inspired in part by good practice I have observed in schools around the diocese.

First, spiritual development. Simpler in primary schools than in secondaries, we should focus on prayer and the spiritual development of pupils, and also of staff, who in some manner model it. Spiritual development can be offered to every student in school, regardless of affiliation. We might focus on interiority, an atmosphere in school at appropriate times of recollection. We could help pupils develop spiritual skills: meditation, contemplation, silent prayer, biblical prayer, spontaneous prayer. We could hold Eucharistic *Holy Half-Hours*, pay short visits to church, give formation in *lectio divina* and imaginative prayer. We could open the treasury of Catholic spirituality and the writings of the saints, inviting representatives from our diocesan religious communities: the Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, Salesians. Staff need a programme, with formation-sessions and if possible, retreat-days. They might frequently offer mission-prayers for the spread of the Gospel and the love of Jesus.

I pause a moment here to thank and value greatly all the chaplains in our schools: the priests who serve, and the lay chaplains too, all of whom do great work fostering the spiritual development and human support of both staff and students.

Secondly, understanding. We need to study in-depth the inner mind of the unchurched and the non-churchgoing, and the categories and demographics of this: children and adults, parents and carers, the reasons they de-emphasise religion, the causes of non-practice, the questions raised, the factors that result in unbelief, the prompts that assist religious experience and the latent signs of faith. A typology would usefully guide the deployment of resources. Schools, heads, teaching staff, chaplains are in a unique position for this. I mention here the work of the diocesan Inactive Catholics Team and the Social Research Unit, which currently are collaborating on the *Share Your Story* project, with St. Mary's University, Twickenham. Please encourage non-practising relatives and friends to contribute to the survey.¹⁰

Thirdly, personal contact. Evangelisation occurs through friendship, personal contact. In the Early Church, the Faith spread one-to-one through business links, family and friends, acquaintances and chance meetings, like Philip and the eunuch in Acts 8. To be an effective evangeliser in school, the staff-member must be holy, confident, well-formed in faith, with the positive 'tone' of Good News Pope Francis models, and the conviction the Holy Spirit is preparing the Way. The task is more about being than doing, walking alongside, sharing joys and sadness: the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, illness, disappointment, good news. It means being a good listener, one who cares. Our Schools Department might facilitate the sharing of good practice, supporting staff in their evangelising mission, reflecting on the vocation to be a teacher, and providing more on-going theological formation of teachers, perhaps through study-sessions. Staff meetings could begin with a significant period of prayer and formation, as in the diocesan pattern. We might also give attention to the formation of governors for the ministry they perform, with prayer and a curriculum of on-going formation at each meeting, again as in the diocesan pattern.¹¹

Fourthly, visibility. Every disciple might make the Faith more visible: a Rosary in the car, a holy picture on the wall, wearing a crucifix, making the Sign of the Cross before eating, or when passing a church, or upon seeing a hearse. Again, in conversation to say: 'Thanks be to God,' 'Please God' or 'I'll say a prayer for you.' Using media is important. Our Tradition is a rich tool-box of things old and new: signs and symbols, Gregorian chant, the saints, icons, new media, worship music and 21C artistic commissions. I know from visiting that all our schools have abundant Catholic iconography, with devotional objects, crucifixes, statues and sacramentals, posters and displays. But some suggestions: swap objects around occasionally to ensure freshness, commission new works, name house-groups and classrooms after saints, use the school newsletter in a more evangelistic manner, link the school website to the parish,

¹⁰ See <http://mystoryshared.co.uk> (November 2015)

¹¹ There is standard sheet for use with prayers before a meeting and then a relevant passage from a Church document as a basis for a brief discussion. For a copy, email a request to bishop@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

diocese and diocesan youth service, commission school ambassadors or link-students with parishes, and have a school rep on the pastoral area Evangelisation Strategy Team. Again, we could encourage every home to sign up for the diocesan E-news.¹²

Fifthly, forming intentional disciples. Every disciple needs formation in order to be more missionary. This is about transforming the ‘service mentality’ – the parish and clergy are here to serve my needs – into an outward-focused evangelistic mentality. This is a difficult shift to bring about. Many parishes are static. Could people be encouraged to bring a friend? The diocesan *Called and Gifted* programme is a help. Its focus is not institution-led but person-centred. It is designed specifically to help laity one to one reflect on their relationship with God, to identify the charisms or gifts God has given them, and to discern how to use those gifts as a missionary-disciple. Heads, teachers, governors and chaplains might consider taking this programme. Beyond this, it would be good to restore close links between schools and parishes, with a priest as chaplain and governor in every school, and schools helping to induct and form new priests. In turn, some of our parishes need to become more child-friendly and family-oriented, with facilities, groups, programmes and liturgies that can help bridge the years from Baptism to Year R to First Holy Communion to Confirmation.

And sixthly, projects. Schools and parishes, alone or together, could undertake simple, mission-projects. Parishes and schools could leaflet a new housing development, operate a food-bank, serve the poor, establish a stall on a local market, visit retirement homes, make use of social media, hand commuters invitations to a parish event, hold a Theology on Tap session in a local pub, organise special prayers and devotions, talk with people at the school gates, and so on. Doing a Catholic form of street witness – a procession, music, leafleting shops, praying the Rosary – can be a fruitful mission-project. Some of our churches need to be made more user-friendly, tidy, comfortable, welcoming, with a good presence on the internet. Even the basic matter of keeping the church open for prayer is a hugely evangelistic activity. Schools too might have a role in this: hosting an Alpha session, twilight sessions for parents and carers on prayer and spirituality, short catechetical courses, Bible study, and so on. Again, breakfast and after-school clubs might offer evangelistic opportunities.

So, in inviting every school to develop its own strategy for evangelisation, these six areas might be considered: spiritual development, understanding better the non-churchgoing and unchurched, personal contact, making faith more visible, forming missionary-disciples, and undertaking mission-projects. What I am saying this morning is that I wish to invite every school to reflect on how to make evangelisation central to their aims and aspirations and how to collaborate even more closely with local parishes and with the diocesan mission. I know many of you think about this already, but I hope that what I have said will spur everyone to look again and to give energy to shifting our schools as an agent of the diocese from maintenance to mission.

¹² Sign-up via the diocesan website www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Conclusion

To conclude. I wish to say how much I have enjoyed visiting our schools and how greatly impressed I am by them. Once again I thank all of you profoundly – heads, governors, teachers, support staff, chaplains - for all you do to educate our young and to hand on the Faith. I thank you for your witness, your example, your fidelity, your hard work, your expertise, your support of me. I thank too Fr. Jamie McGrath, Urszula and the Schools Department team for their great work. The Lord has blessed our Diocese of Portsmouth with outstanding resources, clergy and people, and with huge potential. We have received from our forebears an extraordinarily rich patrimony. But the Lord is now calling us to the next phase, to work of NE. In this we face great challenges, though without despondency. In his 1986 encyclical on the Holy Spirit, *Dominum et Vivificantem* 53, Pope JP2 says the “Holy Spirit blows where It wills” offering everyone “in a manner known only to God ... the possibility of being associated with the Paschal Mystery.”¹³ That’s why I can say with complete confidence and conviction that the Holy Spirit is at work now, at this very moment, in the heart of every child, woman and man living in our diocese – all 3.1M of them - wooing them towards God, towards Christ, towards full communion with His Church. Let us pray, through Mary Immaculate and St. Edmund our Patron, that in the Jubilee Year ahead, all may find in the merciful Heart of Christ that true, genuine, lasting human happiness and fulfilment for which they long.

Thank you for listening!

A question for discussion: In developing an evangelisation strategy for our schools, what issues might we need to consider?

¹³ See John Paul II *Dominum et Vivificantem* 53 in ed. J. Dupuis *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church. Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition.* (New York, Alba: 2001) 448 (n. 1048)