

Investing in Young People

A couple of weeks ago I picked up a programme for London Irish Rugby Club at a friends house. As I was flicking through the magazine I was drawn to an article titled,

“Investment in youth development more important than ever”

It focussed on the need for all clubs to focus on the development of youth in terms of time and money. It went on to say that youth development was key to their very survival! The article goes on to say that this investment bears fruit in that there is a greater loyalty and team spirit is also stronger.

But where does the Church fit in to all this?



I think that we could follow this lead in how we approach young people. By investing in our young people we are showing that we are good stewards. Here are some questions to think about as we look to work with our young people.

Time

How much time do we as a community invest in young people? How much time do we spend with our young people? What are we doing to encourage our young people to spend time with their peers at Church? How do we spend time listening to young people to understand their views? Are we looking for instant results or are we prepared to wait for the seeds we grow?

Talents

In what ways do we encourage young people to use their individual gifts and talents in the church? Are young people invited into parish ministry? What opportunities do we give young people to receive formation and training? How do we affirm and celebrate the contribution our young people make in the Church and wider community?

Treasure

What investment in youth ministry takes place in our parish or pastoral area? Do we expect young people to fundraise to support youth activities? Do we support our young people in going on pilgrimage or to World Youth Day?

Pastoral Plan

One of the key responses that came from young people during the **“Growing Together in Christ”** process the diocese held a few years ago was that they wanted to be involved in the Church. They saw the Mass as being very important and that they wanted to participate fully.

As we seek to put the Pastoral Plan into action we must ensure that young people are fully involved in all aspects of parish life.

By investing in young people we are enabling them to develop as followers of Christ and to be “good stewards of God’s varied grace”. (1Peter 4:10) so that they too can **“Go Out and Bear Fruit”**.



This is what is needed:

a Church for young people, which will know how to speak

to their heart and enkindle, comfort, and inspire enthusiasm in it with the joy of the Gospel and the strength of the Eucharist;

a Church which will know how to invite and to welcome the person who seeks a purpose for which to commit his whole existence;

a Church which is not afraid to require much, after having given much;

which does not fear asking from young people the effort of a noble and authentic adventure, such as that of the following of the Gospel.

Pope John Paul II,
1995 World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Meditation

Father Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine Monk and Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation. He is leading two events taking place on **Saturday 28th March**. The first takes place 2-4.30 pm at St John’s Cathedral, Portsmouth, and the second at The United Church, Jewry Street, Winchester 7-9 pm . If you are keen to develop meditation with your young people this may be an ideal opportunity to find out more. Both events suggest a donation of £ 5—£ 10 on the door. For further information, or to book a place, please contact Pat Nash on 01794 512006 or email patnash@talktalk.net