

Formation Group Meeting Report

Saturday March 3rd 2007

Br Benet Conroy

Present: Mike Worthington, Owen Smith, Ben Foy, Aidan Dowle, Benet Conroy

Apologies: Siobhan Simms, Barry O'Sullivan, Vin Kilty

The meeting was called to prepare the presentation to be made at the Palm Sunday weekend on Lasallian Association and to refine the programme for the LACE weekend in May.

One person should take responsibility for presenting the programme that the Formation Group wished to propose, so that there would be a single voice. Since Ben Foy had already been asked to present the Australian programme, he was nominated to present the whole formation package in a coherent way.

The Formation group wished to propose a 5 level programme of formation and would be outlining this at the weekend, and preparing a brochure giving details. Since this would have implications for finance, personnel and resources, the matter would be put to the District Council and the LEM Council before the Palm Sunday weekend. It was also recognised that Malta and Ireland would have their own contributions to make to the programme.

It was felt that outlining a coherent and developing programme would make it easier to determine other items such as place(s), personnel, equipment, budget. A list of personnel able to deliver the programme would also be needed.

The target starting date would be September 2007. It would be on a professional basis and be available to schools in the network initially and other schools subsequently. We propose that what is on offer be called Lasallian Formation Services and that there be five different programmes on offer.

LASALLIAN FORMATION SERVICES

1. INDUCTION:

Providing courses for new teachers to the school, teachers new to the Lasallian network and NQTs. This would address issues different from standard procedures etc and would concentrate on the spiritual and pedagogical aspects of a Christian school, aspects like Liturgy, dealing with stress,

education as ministry and the putting into practice the statements made in the school Mission Statement. It enables the school to present a coherent vision to new staff.

2. ON-GOING FORMATION

LACE provides an on-going formation programme but only once a year, and in one place. This programme could be offered in a variety of locations, or within the school over a period. It could be the starting point for regional Lasallian groups of schools or teachers. It also recognises the variety of groups involved in Lasallian Association, many of which are not currently involved in presenting the Lasallian vision to others.

It was also recognised that a separate on-going programme could be beneficial for those who had been teachers for 4 or 5 years. The Australian District found this a very fruitful area for development.

3. INSET:

The provision of quality in-service programmes based on Christian ethos in schools, Lasallian pedagogy and spirituality, staff spiritual development. This would be able to tap into the Bishops' request that one of the five training days be devoted specifically to the Christian nature of the school. This could involve whole school, sections, subject areas, attitudes to learning, Lasallian thinking. Each element could be stand-alone or part of a (say) 3-year development programme for a school.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Australian programme was seen as very relevant here. The programme was well developed and researched and the methodology very appropriate for those actively working in education. It was aimed at educators with some years of experience, perhaps in or on the edge of leadership and management. The Formation Group had been introduced to the programme and were impressed. It involves action-research and would put a network of staff into close contact. Since the majority is via the Web, it can be done at the person's own pace; and all the necessary resources are to be found in on-line links. It

also has academic credibility since it could lead to an MA after 2 years.

5. FORMATION FOR ALL LASALLIAN GROUPS (programme under construction)

It was recognised that nearly all of the above is directed at schools and formal education, and that the Lasallian Association network is much wider involving LDWP, former Kintbury Team members, LAMB, Young Lasallians, Brothers and former Brothers, former Students..... All need to drink from the same well. Each of these groups would have something to contribute to Lasallian Formation, but there is no current structure to enable this. The Formation Group would like volunteers/nominees from other Lasallian groups to offer input into this aspect of Association.

It was hoped that each school in the network would have a nominated person to be the link with Lasallian Formation.

For the programme to be properly co-ordinated it would probably need someone formally employed, with secretarial help. Schools could then book different aspects of this formation service and not just on the ad hoc arrangements at present.

Costs to implement the formation service would include: personnel, resources, place(s), web, training, licenses for the Australian programme.

The Formation Group would like to present the above at the Palm Sunday weekend and would hope to have the Saturday morning to do so. It would involve a presentation on the subject; a chance for personal reflection; group work and then feedback, which would include what the other Lasallian Groups could offer to the programme. The Formation Group wishes to make its adoption a proposal for the meeting, while recognising that the other Lasallian groups have input to offer which may lead to changes and additions. The Formation Group intends meeting on Saturday afternoon; all interested persons are welcome to join them.

The Formation Group is initially prepared to help launch the programme for the first year, during which time appropriate personnel could be appointed.

Ben Foy will prepare the multi-media presentation for Saturday morning. Benet Conroy will prepare a brochure "advertising" the proposed Lasallian services. Owen Smith will prepare a prayer.

The next Formation Group meeting will be on Saturday afternoon March 31st in Kintbury.

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