

A VISION FOR PRESENTATION BROTHERS YOUTH MINISTRY

It is the year 2018 and an RTE Nationwide programme is reporting on what they found when they visited Mardyke House.

A NET Ministries team arrived in Cork in 2015 and operated out of the Presentation Brothers Youth Ministry Centre for two years to spread the Christian message. They have been running catechetical programs and retreats in secondary schools throughout Cork city and have built up a good relationship with a large number of young people. NET has been using the PBYM Centre to run weekly social, formation and prayer events in the evenings.

The youth centre is now fully alive, vibrant and active, enjoying its close proximity to UCC and the secondary schools. It is being utilized by the secondary schools as a place for retreats and has developed a strong engagement with the Pres. TY students who attend regularly for various programs. There are faith programs and events happening on a daily basis. In some ways it resembles a Hermitage where young people go to achieve a level of calm and nourish their souls. Occasional days of recollection take place for students.

Open days and social events are used to invite more young people to become involved. Alpha programs are run in Mardyke House two evenings a week; one evening offers the Alpha Youth Film Series for ages 14-17, the other evening offers the Alpha course to young adults, many of whom attend third level institutions around Cork. Growth Groups have also developed which provide a follow on from Alpha. These allow both adults and young people who desire to live the Christian life to support each other in the Faith. Pilgrimages to Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick have become annual events with other pilgrimages having taken place to World Youth Day and other faith festivals e.g. Youth 2000.

A small team of coordinators and volunteers have worked out ways to manage the facilities and raise funds to cover the operating costs. Volunteers and young people feel passionate about youth ministry and feel like shareholders in the Presentation Brother's mission. Leadership groups have developed from those who have attended events in the PBYM Centre and they invite others to visit and engage. PBYM has become a recognisable organisation with a visible charism, mission and image.

The ministry is timeless, consistent and independent of the coordinator. Presentation Brothers are visible at events and become energised by the work taking place there. The ministry enables the Presentation Brothers to “grow their own vocations”.

The ministry has developed a strong link with the Diocese and with the surrounding parishes. PBYM advertise their events through the parishes in bulletins and through Mass talks. There is recognition of the importance of linking young people back to their parishes where they can receive the sacraments with greater love, knowledge and faith. The engagement with the events in the PBYM Centre provide a stepping stone for young people to the church or their local parish and allows them to encounter and witness. Young people feel invigorated by their experience of Church through PBYM and are inspired to breathe life back into their own parishes by building up groups, or becoming more involved in their local faith community.

The ministry is also connected to and working with the wider church. PBYM centre supports other youth ministries in Ireland and accommodates other youth movements to meet and minister to young people. The PBYM Centre regardless of nationality or language provides a warm welcome (*Failte Ui Cheallaigh*) to all, and is recognized as a place not only which allows people encounter and witness but which grows future witnesses.

The building also operates as a drop in centre for teenagers after school on a Wednesday afternoon. The centre is a welcoming space where all young people feel at home. The PBYM Centre has developed a new way of being with young people and helps them to discover their identity and to grow as people. It has become a place where the young, with help, can explore the challenges facing them full of renewed hope for the future. [*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium* S. 108 p..59/60]

In 2018, the PBYM Centre has become a place that provides the six necessary pillars to support the faith life of young people; pilgrimage/retreat, prayer, formation, fellowship, leadership and charitable outreach.