

ECHONEWS

parishes are coming up with solutions

the gaps



THE TEAM: The Cork Institute of Technology chaplains with the student chaplaincy support team for 2005/2006 are, left to right: Chaplains, Edel Dullea, Fr Kieran O'Driscoll, students, Emma O'Donovan, Deirdre Callnan and Eoin Cotter.



COMMITTEE: Members of Kinsale Pastoral Committee at their monthly meeting. From left: Anne Wright, Margaret Canty, Myles McSweeney, Gerard O'Leary, chairman, Joe Heffernan, Marie O'Sullivan, secretary, and Canon John O'Mahony, PP.

Picture: Richard Mills

councils, established to take responsibility for all organising and planning within the parish and the establishment of such a council in every parish is on the diocesan agenda.

Before, the parish agenda would have largely been set by the clergy.

"It belongs to a new sense of what the church is — a church characterised by partnership," says Fr Tom Hayes, director of pastoral strategy in the diocese.

Kinsale parish assembly, whose 42 members include three priests and one nun, has been in existence for the past four years, and is involved in planning all elements of parish life.

From deciding on the format of Easter ceremonies, to the organisation of family events, to the establishment of services for the community, such as drug awareness nights, or retirement groups, the

parish assembly is involved.

Chairman of the assembly's ruling body, the pastoral council, Gerard O'Leary, says it's a great opportunity for lay people to get involved in the parish.

"It gives people a real sense that it's our church," says Mr O'Leary. "Before, there were too many burdens on priests. The renovation of our parish church was completed last year, which we organised, whereas in the past it would have been the responsibility of the priest."

"This is an opportunity for people in the parish to give something back."

Another area where priests have been replaced by lay people is in the area of chaplaincy.

When Cork Institute of Technology chaplain, Edel Dullea attends a gathering for chaplains from the Institutes of Technology this week, she will be the only female and

non-clergy member attending.

Chaplain at CIT for the past year, Ms Dullea and the college's other chaplain, Fr Kevin O'Driscoll together provide support to the student and staff body, particularly in time of crisis, tragedy and bereavement.

"Young people don't have the same expectation that there has to be a priest as a chaplain," says Ms Dullea.

"It's good to have a balance between male and female and between lay and religious. We're the listening ear for everyone."

With only six seminarians currently in training as priests for the Cork diocese, there is little doubt that the church of the past is gone and the participation of lay people is destined to increase.

"This is an exciting and challenging time for the Church," says Bishop Buckley. "It's a time of renewal."

O'Shea on Monday



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Four legs good, four eyes better

SENSE of humour can be an idiosyncratic thing and what tickles one person may leave another cold, but pound-for-pound for me there is nothing funnier than a dog wearing glasses.

Sunglasses make a dog, any dog, look just so incredibly cool and spectacles can turn these basically dumb creatures intelligent for that instant between your reaching for the camera and them shaking the glasses off. Unfortunately, monocles don't fit around dogs' bulgy eyes, and the eye patch, while momentarily amusing, only made my dog walk around in circles.

If I was running the newspaper I would have a picture of a dog in eyewear appearing at the very least monthly.

Don't get me wrong, I don't like dog owners who dress their pets up in clothing or slippers or anything crazy like that, I simply like the comedic value of Dogs in Glasses.

While I wield no influence over the canine:picture ratio in the newspaper (yet!), I have used my position on the sports desk to subtly introduce another iconic doggie image: the pooch on the pitch.

Every couple of months the pictures we receive from the local soccer and GAA games at weekends include an incursion on the field of play by a dog. This always leads to the same argument between the other sports sub-editors and me. I argue that a picture of a dog encroaching on the pitch is inherently amusing and the brief suspension of the rules of the game highlights the underlying absurdity of sport; while they cannot believe I want to use another picture of a dog on a pitch.

But, for the most part, the paper will only print a picture of a doggie if it is "relevant" to the "news".

Like the story we carried a fortnight back about an initiative launched by the Cork Animals home. Underneath a picture of a golden labrador puppy (unspectacled) staring at a microchip was an article outlining a scheme that involves inserting an identification chip under the skin of dogs so they can be found if lost or stolen.

Now, while I have occasionally heard rumours about dogs being stolen, let's face it, 'lost' is a euphemism for 'roadkill'. Dogs don't get lost. They know where home is and if they ain't coming back, they've probably got good reason not to.

A good example of dog's homing instincts came from the Scottish Press Association last month:

"Mike Tait feared the worst after his eight-year-old dog disappeared ... Mr Tait had been driving home with his black labrador Archie when he decided to stop at Inverurie Station to look at the famous Royal Scotsman train. He left Archie on one of the platforms and went across the bridge to look at the train but by the time he returned his dog had already boarded the 20.05 service to Inverness."

Tait drove home, distraught over

ROBERT O'SHEA has found the secret weapon of comedy — a dog in glasses

the dog's disappearance, so you can imagine his amazement when he received a phone call within minutes of arriving to tell him that Archie was safe and sound and had scored the winning goal in a local cup match.

OK, he was told: Your dog is safe and sound and is waiting for you at Inch Station — two miles from his house.

RSPCA spokeswoman, Doreen Graham said: "The fact that Archie got on the right train was a coincidence, but he probably knew which stop to get off at because he recognised local smells."

My own dog, Harry, like Archie, is a labrador. While I won't be able to train-test him until the Kent-Midleton line opens in two years' time (or in doggie years: 14; or in Iarnrod Eireann years: 20) I am confident he could find his way back. While I wouldn't label him mad, nor particularly fond of the sun at noon, Harry does share one trait with Englishmen: his home is his castle.

This manifests itself in some strange ways however. Whenever he is in the house all he wants to do is get out (scratching at the door, backing away from people and growling) and whenever he is out he wants to get back in (more scratching, barking and as a last resort that will clinch the deal, resting his hands in his paws and pulling a moony face outside the patio door.)

Another reason I know Harry won't get lost is because he is terrible at our favourite game, which is hide and seek. This usually inadvertently starts as a game of chase after Harry grabs something important to me like a sock or the remote control and tears off. Although I am grateful that he is such a bad player as it allows me to retrieve my valuable quickly, there is something poignant about him not having the imagination to vary his covert locations. While Harry is probably thinking, "this is a good hiding place," due to a complete lack of spatial awareness in his species he fails to realise that his hind-quarters and exuberantly wagging tail are a quick giveaway, and merely his head is covered by the curtains.

But the game is on now so I grab his favourite sliothar, pretend to throw it one way (which sends him several yards in that direction and gives me a chance to hide) and then posit myself in the nearest nook. His keen sense of smell should give Harry an advantage but often he is so excited that he runs straight past me. Runs straight past me and into a wall. I win again. He just can't seem to get the hang of that second eye patch.