

GENERAL SYNOD 2009

CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH DEPARTMENT REPORT

Proposed by the Right Reverend Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Your grace and members of synod it gives me pleasure to speak on behalf of the Church of Ireland Youth department. When the Bishop of Tuam decided the time had come for him to stand down as president I was delighted to accept this exciting opportunity to be part of the youth ministry at this exciting time.

However let me first pay tribute to Bishop Richard for his stamina, patience and wise counsel. The youth department and in particular the central board, the executive and the staff are grateful for his constant support and friendship. Could I suggest that you ensure you give him some sponsorship money for having done the London marathon?

During the past year there has also been a deepening of partnerships with the Youth Affairs Section of the Irish Government and the Priorities Fund. The Youth Department is very grateful to the R.C.B. for their support and constant help.

I have been conscious already of the very hard work done by those who serve on the Central Board and the Executive. This workload will now be shaped by the impact of the Youth Work Audit that will be launched soon. This audit will help us realise what we do well in our youth work across the church and it will help us set new targets and direction for the future.

From the report itself I would draw your attention to the work of the staff across a wide range of diocesan youth networks and youth agencies across the Irish youth sector. There

are new resources to support youth work including “Where would Jesus be?” and “Inspire”.

There is a significant central CIYD ministry programme in support of dioceses and highlights were the Connect training days, Summer Madness and Anois (Anish) 2008. There has also been a deepening partnership between CIYD and diocesan and parish youth workers.

This past year also saw the launch and uptake the Jump intern programme. Interns are present at synod and would be delighted to speak to anyone who wants to know more details. I also want to pay tribute to Catherine Little who has made this programme work by her vision, energy and humility.

In looking to the future CIYD will be beginning the process of making a new strategic plan for 2010-2015 which will be shaped by the youth work audit and of course the new economic situation.

The economic downturn will have a profound impact on youth work in the public and church sectors. Please pray for wisdom for those who will have to make hard choices in the support given to youth work.

Finally I want to say thank you to the staff who serve us and our young people with such energy and professionalism. They are a great gift to us and please do not take them for granted.

It is with great pleasure that I commend the youth department report to synod.