

Community Building

Our retreat on Saturday March 6th had the topic of community building

We began by praying psalm 139:

„O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You both precede and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to know! I can never escape from your spirit! I can never get away from your presence!”

The topic was introduced by a **definition of community building**:

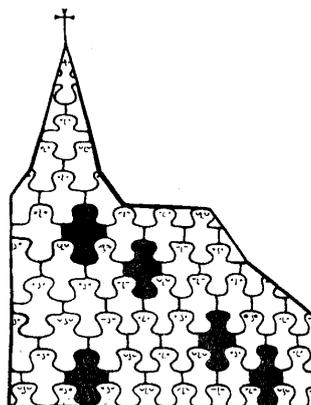
“Community Building increases the ability of a ... community to use the experience and wisdom of many people in the work. As people participate in community building, they create a place where all are welcomed and supported.” (found on www.ncrlc.com/msword_downloads/Community-Building.doc)



We then started to have a look at **our own history with faith** (Ignatius of Loyola: *“There are very few people who realise what God would make of them if they abandoned themselves into his hands, and let themselves be formed by his grace”*).

We were helped by the biblical story of Peter and his friends who apply all techniques for good fishing, but they do not fish anything. Then, because Jesus says so, they start again, against all experience: *“Master, we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, we'll try again”* (Luke 5).

Do we listen to the words of Jesus? Do we follow them?



The next step was **my history with the Church**. For this we had different pictures of the Church handed out. We were invited to see which are the images that fit our image of our Church best (sacramental, social, biblical, “event character”, hierarchical, participative...). The biblical verses: *“Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is useless. Unless the Lord protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones”* from psalm 127 helped us here.



The third step was the question of where **my place in All Saints** is. For this we had copies of different sights of All Saints (a *google earth* picture with the whole building, photographs of the chapel, the community hall, the room for meetings of the council, a barbecue...). Where is my place, where do I see others? The biblical text was 1 Cor 12 about unity in diversity and about different charisms that are necessary to form one body: *“Here is a list of some of the members that God has placed in the body of Christ: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who can get others to work together, those who speak in unknown languages. Is everyone an apostle? Of course not. Is everyone a prophet? No. Are all teachers? Does everyone have the power to do miracles? Does everyone have the gift of healing? Of course not. Does God give all of us the ability to speak in unknown languages? Can everyone interpret unknown languages? No! And in any event, you should desire the most helpful gifts.”*

We finished with a sharing about the way we would like to see All Saints develop.