

TUAM, KILLALOE & LIMERICK UNITED DIOCESAN COUNCIL FOR MISSION

REPORT FOR SYNOD 2024, ref CALENDAR YEAR 2023

1. Meetings

Five committee meetings of the Diocesan Council for Mission took place in 2023. All meetings were held on Zoom. There were three in-person Mission Evenings, two in Adare and one in Gort. The third Mission Evening was immediately followed by the fifth committee meeting. The Annual General Meeting was deferred because of the small attendance and in its place, the present officers – chairperson, secretary, treasurer, communications officer and our Diocesan representative on the Central Council for Mission – were deemed to be re-elected for a further year. Mission Sunday took place on Sunday 26th November 2023.

2. Mission Evenings

(i) First Mission Evening, Woodlands Hotel, Adare 19th April, 2023.

The evening began with the presentation of cheques to Mr Geoff Scargill of Protestant Aid and Ms. Teresa Ryan of St. Vincent de Paul, Mid-West region. Each charity received €4,654.25 from Mission Sunday 2022.

Following the presentation of cheques, Mr. Ted Sherwood of the Tuam part of our united diocese spoke about a mission project begun by Bishop Rooke in collaboration with ICMS and the Bishops Appeal many years ago that involved ongoing support from his Diocese for facilities in Kajiado Diocese in southern Kenya.

In the discussion afterwards, Bishop Burrows paid tribute to the work of overseas mission and outlined his plans to find a suitable follow up project for the parishes of the joint diocese which he will launch by visiting every church – some 94 in all – in the Autumn. He indicated his focus will be on literacy programmes for women in Africa. Funds raised would be channelled through Bishops Appeal.

(ii) Second Mission Evening, Lady Gregory Hotel, Gort, 14th September 2023.

This took place on 14th September in the Lady Gregory Hotel Gort. The purpose of the meeting was to present the two overseas projects selected for our Mission appeal of 2023. One project is based in Madagascar where, *Feed the Minds*, a UK-based ecumenical Christian international development charity is commencing a one-year project with a local partner organisation, Tanjona Association, to improve biodiversity and livelihoods for women in Madagascar through sustainable silk production. The Reverend Janet White Spinner, who had been on a holiday in Madagascar in the recent past, gave a first-hand account of what she saw and the people she met and talked with while she was there. She painted a vivid picture of a rich and ancient land, rich in unique flora and fauna but despoiled by commercial exploitation and a people with a rich and varied culture but living in great poverty.

Bishop Michael then spoke about the second overseas project, which was about supporting the Mothers Union of Burundi who is working for greater social empowerment through literacy and business training in three dioceses in that country. In order to raise awareness for these two projects, Bishop Michael outlined his plans for an episcopal ‘peregrination’ when, in the space of 14 days in November, he will visit every church in the united diocese, some schools as well, meet people, encourage giving to these projects and play the hymn *Christ is the King, O friends rejoice* in every church. The meeting closed with the singing of this hymn.

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(iii) Third Mission Evening, Woodlands Hotel, Adare, 27th October 2023.

Dr Catherine Smith, Operations Executive with the Church's Ministry of Healing, was the speaker on this occasion. Catherine provided a brief history of the Church's Ministry of Healing in Ireland (CMH:I) and went on to speak particularly about the help it was able to provide during the recent Covid-19 pandemic. She explained how CMH:I serves the church and the wider community through training and workshops, quiet days, retreats and guest speakers. She introduced us to an extensive range of resources available for those who are ill, distressed or grieving. By way of example, she then played a video on the importance of cultivating gratitude in times of stress. In conclusion, Catherine encouraged all present to advertise the facilities available from the CMH:I website in our respective parishes, i.e. ministryofhealing.ie

3. Committee Meetings during the year

The Committee met on:

Thursday 9 February by Zoom.

Thursday 23 March by Zoom.

Wednesday 28 June by Zoom.

Wednesday 30 August by Zoom.

Thursday 26 October by Zoom and in-person, immediately following the third Mission Evening.

4. Mission Sunday 2023

Mission Sunday 2023 took place on Sunday 26 November. The two overseas projects were as outlined in 2 (ii) above, i.e. silk production in Madagascar and women's literacy in Burundi. Money raised was amalgamated with parish contributions made during the episcopal peregrination and sent via Bishops Appeal.

5. New Rules and Regulations

During 2023, the Council for Mission of the newly united Diocese of Limerick, Killaloe and Tuam developed a new set of rules and regulations to guide its work and submitted these to the Diocesan Synod. The Synod's approval was obtained on 14 October 2023.

6. Interim report on activities in 2024 to date.

Our Mission Sunday appeal this year will be in aid of *the Church's Ministry of Healing* and *the Samaritans*. We are currently planning a one day conference to take place on Saturday, November 16th 2024 entitled "**Community Futures**", aimed specifically at the 25-45 age group. It will address topics of particular concern for them, such as mental health and well-being, loneliness, immigration and how the Church welcomes newcomers, multi-faith perspectives, living on a shared island, housing/homelessness, the ethical future of agriculture and environmental initiatives, and explore these topics in relation to Christian citizenship in contemporary Ireland. The conference will also help to raise awareness of the work of CMH:I and the Samaritans and therefore help our Mission Sunday appeal. Dr. Catherine Smith is chairing the planning committee.

The other matter we have been examining is the future timing of Mission Sunday, and particularly whether or not it might be more effective if held during Lent. If we proceed in this direction, the earliest it could happen would be in 2026.

Signed:..... **Revd. Jane Galbraith, Chair**

Signed:..... **Michael Hanna, Hon Sec.**