

## 8B

*There was a Parish priest one time who became discouraged by the lack of response among the people and the indifference in His parish. He announced that the Parish was dead and everyone should come to the funeral. So, of course, when the word got round they were all very puzzled by it. When they came to mass the following Sunday there was a coffin in the sanctuary with the lid taken off. And the Parish Priest, with a dead straight face, invited the people to come up one by one and view the remains. To their surprise on the base of the coffin there was a large mirror and as each one looked in they could see themselves. I'm told this had the effect of jolting them out of their complacency, the parish 'pulled its socks up' and everyone was involved in something no matter how small after that.*

Parishes sure 'aint' what they used be' especially when there was a glut of priests and the majority of the lay people didn't have to worry too much about taking ownership of their parish since the impression was given that they didn't own it but it belonged to the Church - meaning the Bishop and the priests. As we can see times have changed a bit since then. Priests are 'thinner on the ground' now and it's time for the people to play a less passive role. The making or breaking of a parish is everyone's responsibility.

But many people are involved already whether it be welcoming people to Mass or tidying the Church after Mass or helping with children's Liturgy or working in the Parish office.

But perhaps it is time to look at other areas of Parish life which need exploring.

### No 1: **MISSION**

How do we make contact with Catholics who have become, shall we say 'inactive' over the years? Could it be

accomplished through establishing more 'house groups' in the parish and inviting local people for reflection on some Gospel teaching? How do we set about working more ecumenically with other Christian churches and seeing this in the context of mission?

2. The second area of concern is **Faith development**. We need lots of people to help with preparing children and adults for Baptism, first penance and communion, confirmation, marriage, and Adult converts. Ongoing training will be given for these tasks.

As I said there are many people already involved in varied tasks. But at the end of the day the most important involvement in any parish is participating in Sunday Mass. Some people say it's not 'about bums on seats' but I think that the more bums you have on seats the better chance of establishing a more vibrant Christian community. We pray that God will help us to become the parish He would want us to be. Your Parish needs you. Thank you.