

Irish MSC Provincial Conference 2008

Naming the Now – Envisioning Tomorrow

Thirty two MSC and lay delegates from each of the six areas of the Irish Province gathered in Grace Dieu from 31st March to 5th April for the 2008 Provincial Conference. The Conference theme “Naming the Now – Envisioning Tomorrow” articulated the intention of the week’s work. In this context we attempted to review the progress made on the seven themed statements offered to the Province by the 2005 Chapter, to name the current reality of the Province, its challenges and opportunities, and plan for the coming three years toward the 2011 Chapter.

Considerable preparation had taken place for this Conference, involving the membership of the entire Province in naming the challenges facing us at this moment in our history. The responses from membership formed the “Province-Wide Template”, the core working document of the Conference. This was supplemented by a report from the Provincial and his Council, a document outlining our current personnel profile and forward projections, a financial report, a summary of the reports of the Superior General following his visits to various parts of the Province, and a joint letter from the Superior General and the Chair of the European Provincials Conference stressing the urgent need for Provincial planning across Europe.

The Conference began by assessing the impact of the last Chapter. The first day concluded with a collective understanding and conviction of the need to prioritise our ministries and plan for the future.

The Conference proceeded to review the challenges named in the Province-Wide Template with regard to each of the themes of the last Chapter, with the exception of the Mission and Ministry theme. In mixed groups we named action points for each Challenge, and in area-specific groups these actions were further refined and prioritised according to the reality of each area.

The following day was devoted to the Mission and Ministry theme. The sharing of Fr General at the beginning of the day on the planning experience of other Provinces in the Congregation was found to be particularly helpful. Each area-specific group drew up a process for planning and prioritising ministries which was later proposed to the whole Conference membership.

Recognising both the challenge and the real opportunity that this present moment holds for us, the Conference offers the final documents to the membership of the Province so that we might all engage in shaping the future of our life and mission.