

Notes from the Diocesan Conference at Bognor Regis.

30 January – 2 February 2006

Proclaiming the Faith Afresh

Gillian Million

I attended the Diocesan Conference at Butlins, Bognor Regis last week from Monday afternoon until Thursday afternoon.

A few verses from the Bible as to how I felt at the commencement of the conference:
Matthew 4 vv 18 -20

Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee when he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the lake; for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, 'Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him.

The Conference hosts were the Dean of Rochester, Adrian Newman, and Cindy Kent from Premier Radio and previously in a Christian singing group. There were 500 people including visiting Bishops from other countries, including Estonia.

The theme of the conference was Proclaiming the Faith Afresh. One analogy that I have kept in mind referred to the state of tea, watered down and milk added to keep it going. It was thought much better to provide 'orange juice' and 'tea' or even 'lemon tea' in other words to have the traditional worship, augmented by completely fresh ideas.

At the opening Liturgy delegates were welcomed by the Bishop of Chichester. On that afternoon we met in our cell groups, which were small groups to which you were allocated to discuss, amongst other things, set questions. There was a Main Meeting in the evening.

Each morning began with 7.30 Eucharist, although this was optional. After breakfast there was a Bible study session and after coffee the Main meeting of the day. There was some free time in the early afternoon, followed by your choice of Workshop and Worship. After dinner there was a meeting of the cell groups, followed by entertainment. The second evening including participation by the three Archdeacons! On one evening we went to a late night showing of Narnia!

The last morning began as before, the Main Meeting being followed by the climax of the conference, with the Bishop of Rochester Celebrant and Speaker.

At the end of the conference, I now pray to have the vision and courage to help set up and establish some of the ideas we heard about, alongside our traditional worship so that we can bring in a bigger and wider spread of people and broaden our congregation.

Worship Sessions

Rev. Alison Newman

During the conference we were invited to choose to take part in two worship sessions – there was a choice between Taize worship evening prayer, cafe style worship a prayer labyrinth, Christian mediation, charismatic worship Celtic Iona worship or a Eucharist and something called grace academy.

So I decided to go and try something different, something that I didn't know much or anything about. The first evening I went to **Cafe Worship**.

I don't know what image that conjures up for you! It is one of the ideas of offering a different type of worship for people who would feel uncomfortable about coming into a church set up. So many people