



Missivet Number 1 2011

A publication of the Diocese of Växjö in the Church of Sweden

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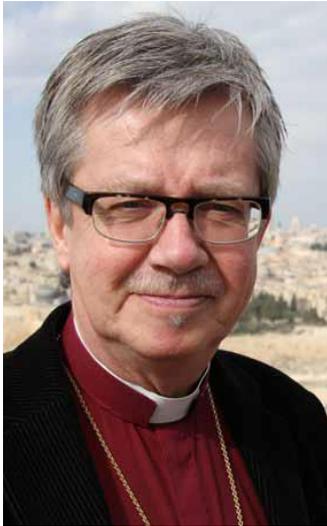
**on the theme 'Till Tro!'
('Towards Faith')**

the Växjö Diocese programme to energise and inspire parishes and the church membership to greater confidence in the Christian faith and its outworking.

(Available via the Oxford Diocese Partnership for World Mission web site www.pwm.oxford.anglican.org)

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Towards Faith in Faith (*Till tro i tilltro*)



"We are now going up to Jerusalem!" The time of the Lenten Fast has come. We are on the way. Step by step we go. Sunday by Sunday through Lent. It is about testing and struggle, but also about bread and atonement.

The progress through Lent is like the road through life. On *Fastlagssöndagen* ('Sunday next before Lent') the road gets its name: 'The way of love'. A road towards faith (*till tro*). A way in faith (*tilltro*).

Inspired by our partner diocese, the Diocese of Oxford, in England and Bishop John we are now shaping our vision for our diocese as a way towards faith, in faith.

The road goes through the parishes. It is in the local area. In your life, and in my life.

In the diocese we can show each other the way and help and support one another, spreading joy and inspiration throughout the diocese.

It is my hope and prayer that *Till tro!* will be a guiding star for our work as a diocese and as parishes. Not new material or new 'tricks' but something which guides us in our special task, based on our gifts and our local circumstances and challenges. An inspiration for shaping parish life in a way that is relevant today, in the 21st century.

When Jesus gathered together his disciples near Jericho and said that they would go up to Jerusalem, he told them everything that would happen to him during the Passover which they would be celebrating. How he would be rejected and scorned, and that he would die and rise again. Luke, who relates this, observes laconically: "The disciples understood nothing of this." But they went with him anyway. And Jesus took them with him.

I hope our parishes will be like that - open and inviting.

It is not necessary to understand, to express oneself in a particular way or be a particular kind of person. The question is only if we will follow along

Let us walk together towards faith, in faith!

+Jan-Olof

Bishop

(Translators note: '*Till tro!*' is translated as '*Towards Faith*', suggesting a journey towards belief and trust. '*Tilltro*', which is here translated as '*faith*' could also be translated as '*confidence*'.)

Till Tro! in Växjö Diocese

Church House in Vaxjo is embarking upon a refocusing of its work.

With the help of five focus areas we want to 'give a lift' to what is important for our church and be cheered by the fact that we do a lot of things that are good.

Together with our parishes we want to build a church that grows and is sustainable in the future. Accordingly we need to focus our endeavours on coordinating the work of supporting the parishes with resources for their work at the local level. It is in the parishes that it is going happen! But we also want to challenge the parishes to recognise and work on their 'black holes'. Here, at two pastoral levels, we have a shared responsibility.

We have borrowed the concept from our partner diocese, Oxford, and its bishop, John. When he moved to Oxford a few years ago he began a conversation with elected representatives and church officers in his diocese about what they should concentrate on going forwards. They agreed on five focus areas which were, essentially, about dusting down what the church had focused on for 2000 years.

Oxford has been very happy to share what it has already done with us but we need to translate and adapt the concept and the material for our circumstances. We are also going to develop parts of the project in conjunction with Oxford, for we want to deepen our thinking on, among other things, youth work. We have also raised common concerns. We are seeing that young men are abandoning their membership of the church and here Oxford has already begun to think about men's spirituality.

So how will we do this in our diocese?! We intend Till tro! to be the framework for what we do. This doesn't entail scrapping the old and replacing it with a lot of new things. Rather we will work from the perspective that everything will come out of the focus areas. Then we will address what we see is lacking in our work for our parishes.

We are going to start a new web-page for communication. This will provide information about what Church House is doing, and also give an opportunity for parishes to share with each other good ideas arising from their work.

From the web it will also be possible to download various materials for this exercise, including what we have gathered from England. We are starting with a simple little prayer guide for use in sewing-circles, by elected representatives, staff, parent and baby groups and confirmation candidates and which can be put out on the book table, to give new inspiration in prayer.

In collaboration with St. Sigfrid's Folk High School (*folkhögskola*) we are going to develop courses for employees, elected representatives and others active in our church. Here too, Till tro! will be the foundation.

For example, we are planning a new course for children's workers in which we bring in all five focus areas, in line with the requirements of these leaders. In the autumn there will be some days thinking about the church's environmental work as one strand in our mission to make a difference in the world.

We are also able, with the help of EU funding, to make a special investment in a personal development project in four benefices, with Till tro! as the basis.

The concept includes thinking about qualities foundational to our work, which is to be contemplative, creative, sustainable, responsible and fulfilling.



What we intend, therefore, is that what is done will be done reflectively, in dialogue with God, and imaginatively – something new, but done without breaking with the tradition of the parish. We shall, of course, conserve what we already have and we will take pleasure in carrying out the process.

Not everything will be ready all at once. It is important that a concept of this kind should develop in dialogue with parishes and over an extended period. Our wish is that before long our work will increasingly be oriented towards 'Till tro!', so dialogue is important. We have, therefore, set up a review group with representatives from different types of benefice, entered into a close cooperation with parishes in the Sunnerbo and Allbo Deaneries (*kontrakt*) and started a project group with representatives from St Sigfrid's High School and Diocesan Church House.

Investment in the use of the web as our method of communication means also that we can easily add what is current or remove what is out-of-date. In addition, use of the web means that we are not limited in our creativity in new thinking and use of modern technology.

This implies, however, that we are never going to be fully 'complete' (or 'ready') but that everything is in a state of constant ongoing development and everyone can join in!

If you have any ideas or comments, please be in touch.

Carin Frennevi
Process leader

Translated from an article in the Växjö Diocese magazine Missivet No. 1 2011.



Areas of Focus in Till Tro!

In the Till Tro! concept we are working with five focus areas. They are five aspects of the life of a parish which we need to engage with in order to become growing parishes. All five aspects are constantly needed but different parishes attach different levels of importance to them and, because of that, the work in our parishes varies in many ways, which is good, as variety is enriching!

The Sacred Centre

This is the foundation for us as a church. Everything stems from the sacred centre. In this, there is both a parish and an individual perspective. It is about deepening our faith, bible reading and prayer, celebration in church services and teaching. Where is the sacred centre in the parish? Is there more than one? How do we strengthen it? What does the parish do to strengthen and deepen Christian faith in its members? Is our church building a sacred centre? In what way? What can we do to reinforce its role in people's consciousness?

Discipleship Today

What does it mean to follow Jesus Christ today? In our day it is difficult to speak about being a follower and discipleship; it seems to be about allowing someone else to be present and in control in our lives. Do we want that? How can we be 'trainees' with Jesus? How can parishes go about winning more disciples? What meetings should be held? How do we read the bible and pray in a group? When was the last time we had new disciples in the parish? How did it happen?

Living Christian Fellowships

There can be many different Christian fellowships in a parish: those who gather together in the church on Sunday, sewing circles, great and small, choirs, teenage groups and so on. What shows that they really are alive and Christian? How does the parish create fertile ground to enable Christian fellowships to be formed? Are there home groups in the parish? How do we ensure that these fellowships grow and bud and don't stagnate? Are there Christian fellowships into which all in the parish feel welcome?

Make a difference in the world

Is it noticeable that there is a parish in the area in which we are at work? Would anybody notice if we ceased to operate? There is both a local and global service aspect. How do we stand up for the weak in our local community? How does our interest in international affairs look? Do we have link parishes? Is the international group in the parish working? How will we influence the world so that it becomes a better place for many to live in?

Leadership

The objective with Till tro! is growth. If we are to grow, we need leaders. What support do pastors and church councils need for the parish to grow? Where are the voluntary leaders prepared to take responsibility? Have we an environment which encourages people to take responsibility in the parish? Does the official leadership share leadership responsibility with others?

The five focus areas contain nothing radically new. These are matters all parishes need to work at. We need to refocus on what is really important!

In the work of reinforcing these fundamental tasks in the parishes, the parishes and diocesan administration share responsibility. We need to consult together about this so that parishes can also support one another in the diocese. We need to build networks of mutual understanding, where trust and shared joy stamp the work which now lies before us.

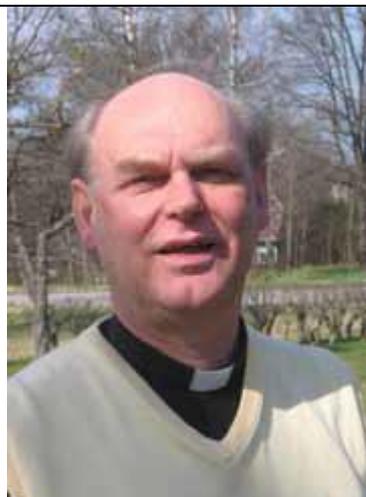
Text: Magnus Wåhlin

Translated from an article in the Växjö Diocesan Magazine 'Missivet No 1 2011'

Views about 'Till tro!'

What do its supporters have to say?

1. This year, Växjö Diocese launches the Till tro! concept which will lead to growth in the parishes of the diocese. What are your first impressions?
2. How have you come into contact with Till tro?
3. What are your thoughts about the five focus areas? (The Sacred centre, Discipleship Today, Making a Difference in the World, and Living Christian Communities).
4. How will you work on Till tro! in your parish (or Standing Committee of Synod – *stiftsstyrelsen*)?
5. What do you hope the idea will lead to?



Göran Alexandersson, Rural Dean for Allbo and Sunnerbo Deanery and Pastor of Alvesta Benefice.

1. My first impressions are positive. We can have a common direction in the diocese to make Jesus known and the faith of individuals can be deepened.
2. I have come into contact with "Till tro" in discussions between the parishes in Allbo and Sunnerbo Deanery.
3. We already work on much of this, but we do it in different ways and with different 'centres of gravity'. Here we have a collective perspective and at the same time we can see that a certain direction is dominant in a parish or Christian fellowship.
4. We will work on all five focus areas. Different sections of the work team will work on "their" areas and at the same time we will try to keep the whole clearly in focus.
5. The aim both in Oxford and here is growth. We will break what is from many points of view a downward trend.



Elisabet Lindow, pastor in Ryssby Benefice.

1. That it is a way to bring the parishes together around core work, which has not, I think, had such a high priority in our diocese.
2. Through a deanery gathering in which Carin Frennevi took part.
3. In fact, these are obvious words for living parishes, but it is good that they are put into focus, if we have accidentally 'dropped (*or lost*) it'.
4. I am one of those who will travel to Assisi with fellow workers in the diocese and a number of pastors to study this material for a week. We will also provide ideas for the web-site which will be put at the disposal of the project.
5. Revival, that is spiritual renewal and living, growing parishes.



Håkan Persson, pastor of Markaryd Benefice.

1. Very positive. I think it is important to be able to think strategically about the future. It is a good thing that Växjö Diocese is initiating such a concept.
2. Through a meeting for pastors in the deanery and via Oxford's web-site.
3. I think they are central and important areas. It is about our task as a church. It is important to be able to think in 'tracks' - of making disciples, sustaining the sacred centre, leadership among volunteers and creating living communities. I believe this can help us in the parishes to think about our mission.
4. We have already begun working on discipleship, leadership and living Christian communities. We hope the idea will help us to build up the parish.
5. I hope the idea helps the parishes to work at what is central and important. Of course, the five focus areas do help us to approach what is important. I also hope that it won't stop at the theoretical, but will lead to action so that our task, derived from the Great Commission, will be carried out.



Birgitta Lindkvist, chair of Agunnaryd Parish Council.

1. A good start at getting the parishes together around a common concept, an idea about how our most important task can be carried out. It is good that this initiative is being taken by the diocese. It gives a clear message of what we want – to work 'towards faith'.
2. The thinking and concept were presented at the follow-up visit to the visitation. I have since familiarised myself with the Anglican web page www.oxford.anglican.org/living-faith-for-the-future which gave the idea for the initiative.
3. A practical and clear way to structure and handle our task and different perspectives. Another way of making clear our task to that given in the Parish Mission Statement (*Församlingsinstruktionen*).
4. We will take part in the diocesan activities around this and hope to be able to adapt the ideas and material from the diocese. We need more information and support in the work.
5. I hope there will be a general rallying around the effort, which is a good initiative to get us gathered around the central task for our parishes. I hope it will lead to increased engagement and an increase of knowledge. I hope that the well thought-out plan will facilitate and inspire the work of the parishes. Perhaps it can also contribute to increased cooperation and use of resources between parishes if we work with a common structure. And, naturally, I hope it will lead 'Towards faith' for many people and thereby, to growth!



Rita Fröberg (m), member of the Standing Committee of Synod.

1. Joy, obviously! Building the church from the inside is where we need help in applying our energy, so that people get the 'keys' to finding their relationship with God.
2. I received mission project information at St Sigfrid's Folk High School a couple of years ago on how this issue is being worked on in Oxford Diocese. Then I felt, 'Think, if we could be ordinary Christians with such clear goals just like they have in their commission'. When the Till tro! project was presented to us by diocesan workers in the Diocesan Standing Committee, we all agreed to it with acclamation.
3. It is very good that we can concentrate on any or several of these focus areas according to our wishes, ability and competence.
4. I hope that it will permeate all the work and I look forward to the teaching plan so that we can then make real a good deal of it in the parish and the Standing Committee. Our task is also to enthuse and inspire the employees and elected representatives.
5. Towards faith obviously! Making us sensitive so that God can use us.



Till tro! – an umbrella for the Folk High School's Course

The work with Till tro! is being carried out in cooperation with St Sigfrid's Folk High School in Växjö which will offer a wide choice of courses connected with the concept.

St Sigfrid's Folk High School and the Diocese will work together with the Till tro! concept for several years to come.

Three of the school's staff, School Chaplain Magnus P Wåhlin, Assistant Rector Jonas Fager and teacher Åse Aronsson are in the process group, together with three representatives from the diocesan office.

The Folk High School will take the material to be used in Växjö Diocese and arrange courses connected to the concept. One of the planned courses is for educationists, on the training of children's leaders. It will take place in Autumn 2011 and will be based on the five focus areas. There will also be Till tro! introduction courses, etc.

"The idea is that Till tro! will be an umbrella for various courses and networks that the Folk High School offers", explains Jonas Fager. "Information on what courses will be on offer will gradually become available."

"The parishes will be invited to carry out a health-check to find out which areas they need to work at, using the five focus areas as a basis. We will then see what needs there are", says Jonas Fager.

The Folk High School has been thinking for a number of years of, in some way, being a support to parish development. Then Till tro! turned up.

"It is very interesting that we and the diocese had exactly the same thought and that we can do this together", says Jonas Fager.

TEXT: Charlotte Granrot Frenberg

Picture: Shows Åsa Aronsson and Jonas Fager, staff members at St Sigfrid's

Translator's note: 'St Sigfrid's Folk High School' is a literal translation in line with the English version of the St Sigfrid's web site (<http://www.sigfrid.se/1.0.1.0/106/1/>). In the English context a similar institution might be called a 'College of Adult Education'.