



YMT Update July 2020

May I begin by thanking you all for the fantastic support that has been shown to the Youth Ministry Team (YMT) over the last 25 years and also for the support given to the Emmaus Village for the past ten years while we have been running our residential retreat programmes. We have had the pleasure of ministering to tens of thousands of young people from our Diocese and we look to the future with great hope and excitement.

Due to COVID-19, we, like most of the rest of the country were forced into lockdown and we were unable to continue our retreat programmes, our festival fortnight and deliver face to face youth ministry in our normal ways. We have, however, made every effort to keep our ministry alive through our social media outlets.

Looking to the next academic year, after lengthy discussions with our Board of Trustees and the Diocese, we have made the difficult decision to suspend our school retreat programme and other residential bookings at the Emmaus Village for the academic year 2020-21. The safety of students, staff and other guests is of utmost importance to us, and for health and safety reasons, we feel that this is a necessary approach to the current situation we are all facing.

We will still be running our Gap Year Team training and formation programme and exploring alternative ways to provide youth ministry until such time as face to face ministry can be safely delivered.

Plans for the YMT Relaunch and reopening of the Emmaus Village are already underway. The closure period will enable us to introduce new and exciting ways of reaching out to the young people of our diocesan schools and parishes, encouraging them into a personal relationship with Christ and fully into the life of the Church. It will also enable us to focus on fundraising for YMT and the Emmaus Village so that our ministry to young people and the diocese can be sustained for the future.

Please pray for us at this challenging and exciting time. Be assured of our prayers and gratitude for all your support. The young people of our Diocese are truly blessed to have the opportunities we all provide.

Best wishes,

Tony Lawless
Director of Youth Ministry