



Rev. William Olhausen of St Matthias Church of Ireland and Fr Joe McDonald of Johnstown Catholic Church help launch the Alpha Course in South Co. Dublin.

17 Alpha Courses have started in South Dublin and Wicklow on the back of a pilot Media campaign involving billboards, cinema ads and banners featuring the famous adventurer, Bear Grylls on Mount Snowdon asking “Is there more to life than this?”

Both Dublin Archbishops strongly back this initiative. **Archbishop Michael Jackson** said “The **Alpha Course** will flourish as we focus on the priorities in our society where God is asking people to make courageous decisions.” **Catholic Archbishop Diarmuid Martin** said: “I commend the **Alpha Course** as one pathway whereby people can come to a knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ today.”

Picture shows Fr. Joe McDonald of Johnstown Catholic Church & the Rev. Dr. William Olhausen of St. Matthias’ church in South Dublin inspecting the banner on Johnstown Catholic Church. 60 are attending their joint Alpha Course. Fr. Joe said “It has been a real delight to meet parishioners who, through the Alpha Course, are encountering the person of Jesus in a real and vibrant way, for some this is a new experience, for others this is a return...for all it is a new experience of God’s grace breaking through in their lives” Dr Olhausen said “It has been an enormous encouragement to see so many people wanting to ask the big questions of life and explore the Christian faith. As ever, it is great fun meeting new people and developing new friendships”

Alpha has grown from some 15 courses in 2005 to 300 now in Ireland, North and South. Worldwide some 2 million people attended an Alpha course last year and Alpha is now running in 169 countries. The DVD containing the talks has just been translated into Arabic and is currently being used in Egypt and Lebanon

Alpha Ireland has joined with Scripture Union and appointed a Youth Alpha Coordinator, Jonny Somerville, in July last. At present he is running 14 Youth Alphas in Secondary/Community Schools mainly in Transition Year. These are being run with school chaplains, RE teachers and some local Youth workers.

It seems that at the end of the Celtic tiger years many people are asking meaning of life questions and the church needs to be reaching out with the gospel to our communities. Alpha is certainly one strategic way of doing this.

For further details see www.alphacourse.ie



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Parishes reach out with Alpha course

Catholics in south Dublin and Wicklow are joining forces with Christians from other denominations in a bid to reach out for those struggling to find meaning amidst the economic downturn.

The cross-community 'Alpha course' – which aims to renew one's experience of Christianity – is being offered at more than a dozen different locations across the region in coming weeks.

Alpha is a 10-week course on basic Christianity being

used to bring renewal and revitalisation into people's lives and churches.

It has spread to 165 countries around the world and last year two million people attended an Alpha course.

The campaign is being supplemented with a billboard and cinema advertising campaign.

Further details are available from Paddy Monaghan / 01-2369821 / 087-2382941 / alphairel@eircom.net