

Building Hope



Parish Resources

Easter 2022

Archdiocese of Dublin

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Our celebration of Easter reminds us that our encounter with the risen Lord emboldens us to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to the people of our time.

The challenges facing the Archdiocese of Dublin include:

- The changing culture in which we proclaim the good news
- The ageing profile of priests: more than 40% of priests currently holding parish appointments are over 70 years of age
- The impact of COVID-19 on active participation

Yet our Christian hope is strong. There are signs of hope all around us:

- Where our parish communities are strong and resilient
- In the commitment of priests, deacons, religious and parish pastoral workers
- In the many thousands of lay women and men who serve the community of faith in a great variety of ministries
- Where there is openness to faith and the life of the Spirit in our families and young people

Now is the time to look to the future, to discern and make decisions together as to how we in the Archdiocese of Dublin can shape our future in the light of the Gospel. All of the baptised have a role to play and a voice to be heard. That is why I am asking the whole diocesan family, in the period between now and Pentecost, to engage together, using these resources and the supports available from the diocese, to prepare a new response to the pastoral situation in which we find ourselves.

May Mary, Mother of the Church, inspire us to open our hearts to the Spirit of Him who is love made flesh.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dermot Farrell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

+Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin

Building Hope

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“Hope is the virtue of a heart that doesn’t lock itself into darkness, that doesn’t dwell on the past, does not simply get by in the present, but is able to see a tomorrow. Hope is the door that opens onto the future.”

– Pope Francis, April 26, 2017

Living the Hope of Easter

Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Pastoral Letter, Easter 2022

“They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him.” (John 20:2). Mary’s grief at the death of her Lord, is compounded by the shock of the empty tomb. Someone has taken the body of the one she loves. Like Mary Magdalene and Jesus, we live in brutal times. In our world we see death and destruction all around: we cannot avoid the inhumanity of war in Ukraine and the plight of refugees; we sense the impending disaster of climate change, and our apparent inability to prevent catastrophe; even within the Church there is much that causes sadness. On that first Easter morning, Mary of Magdala’s dismay was transformed: she and the apostles realised that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Everything had changed.

The story of Easter is the story of a world restored. As in nature, what seemed dead, comes – in the mystery of spring – to leaf and blossom, and is even more beautiful than we remembered. Easter, however, is not only the story that makes sense of what happened to Jesus; it is also the story of what happens in our Church. Our hope permits us recognise the signs of resurrection in our faith communities: the risen Lord is always at work among us, bringing something new to be experienced, embraced, and lived.

Encountering the Risen Lord

Like Peter and his companions, we are commissioned to proclaim the good news of what is happening among us. Our encounter with the risen Lord opens our eyes and emboldens us to face the challenges of our time. Our Lord has not left us; He is with us at every step of life’s journey. For people of faith, Easter is not just some date, but the meeting with Jesus that restores our lives, and rekindles the hope every person needs. “Hope is the door that opens onto the future” (Pope Francis, April 26, 2017). True hope is neither fatalistic nor naïve; but that which permits us embrace life as it is. True hope, born of the faithfulness of our God, unlocks the imagination of God’s people.

Over recent weeks, the people and priests of our parishes have been journeying on the Synodal Pathway. We have been discerning how the Spirit is guiding us on our way through life. We have listened carefully to each other and are coming to know the strength that comes from gathering as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Building Hope

It is time now for the whole diocesan family to travel further, by addressing the specific challenges we face as a diocese. The *Building Hope* Task Force in its Report proposed a strategy by which we can be renewed for the mission which Christ has entrusted to us all. Last February, in response, I issued a Statement of Mission for the Archdiocese emphasising that

“The risen Lord is always at work among us, bringing something new to be experienced, embraced and lived”

our primary purpose is to accompany people today towards an encounter with the Lord Jesus. This undoubtedly requires new ways of looking and thinking; it requires a shift in mind-set; and will need responsible stewardship. It will not happen without prayer and dialogue. We will need to discern and make decisions, and make decisions together. (Statement of Mission) This is now our common road.

I am therefore inviting each parish community, as part of our *Building Hope* strategy, to begin to reflect on how best to respond to the pastoral situation in which we find ourselves. It is very clear that the future will not look like the past. Our world has changed: we cannot return to the past. God is bringing forth something new (see Isaiah 43:19). Our challenge – and it is ours – rather than simply reacting to events, is to shape the future in the light of the gospel. This is the work of God’s Spirit among us, but – like Mary – we have to welcome it (see Luke 1:38).

Courageously Journeying Together

Truly, we need to be courageous in moving beyond ways that no longer work in the Ireland of today. We need each other on this road: that means all the baptised, working closely together, with their gifts and talents, sharing their resources and wisdom, in the service of our parishes, and the one mission entrusted to us all by Christ.

I ask parish teams, parish pastoral councils and parish finance committees to lead their parish in a discussion of the gifts and talents available to them, the education and formation they need, and the parish partnerships that make most sense in their locality. Resources to support this initial *Building Hope* conversation over Easter and Pentecost will be made available shortly. While the work we are now beginning will require commitment over the coming year and more, it also gives us a unique opportunity to witness to and renew our own faith and that of our community.

Opening our Hearts

As we journey through Eastertide, and towards Pentecost, may our prayer for renewal deepen and strengthen. May Mary, Mother of the Church, our mother, who stayed close to the friends of Jesus in dark times, gather us as we celebrate the Resurrection of her Son. May she inspire us to open our hearts to the Spirit of Him who is love made flesh. In working together, and supported by the prayer of the many witnesses that have gone before us, may we be renewed in Christ, and make a difference to our world and all its peoples.

St Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles, pray for us.

St Laurence O’Toole, pray for us.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.



+Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin

“All the baptised, working closely together, with their gifts and talents, sharing their resources and wisdom”

Archdiocese of Dublin

Statement of Mission

The great social, cultural and religious change of our time brings challenges and opportunities for all people – both for people of faith and for people who do not see themselves in this way. In response, the Archdiocese of Dublin is initiating a process of review and renewal, and is providing a Statement of Mission as a starting point for reflection and conversation in each parish and in the diocese as a whole.

Mission

Encounter with the person of Jesus makes us who we are, and shapes what we do. Being at the service of this encounter is the heart of our mission. The living Christ calls and empowers the Dublin Archdiocese to act with resolve and become more fully a place of welcome and compassion, which embodies the power, hope and joy of the gospel.

Vision

Across the Archdiocese we build up together:

- Communities that are faith-filled
- Communities of co-responsibility through servant leadership
- Communities that are active in social justice and
- Communities of welcome and inclusion

We are called to develop new ways to accompany the people of our time. This will require new thinking and a shift of mind-set in everyone. Within the reality of our cultural, social and church context, we must create new possibilities for mission:

- Supporting people to deepen their faith and relationship with God
- Creating the structures that support vibrant communities of faith, and
- Advocating for those who are on the margins

Aware of the need for responsible stewardship, and of the diminishing resources available of time, talent and treasure, we are invited into an ongoing process of prayerful dialogue, discernment and decision making, concerning our missionary priorities.

Values

Continuously opening ourselves to the challenges and opportunities provided by change

Building a culture of dialogue, discernment and solidarity

Actively participating together as baptised People of God

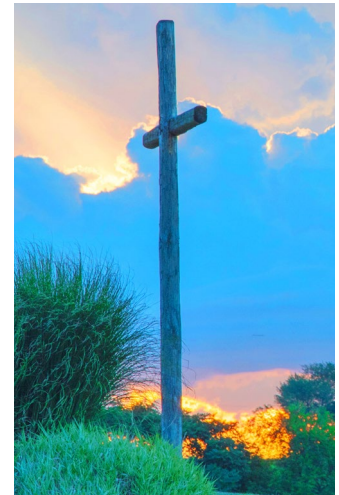
Working alongside each other to effect renewal

Including and accompanying all, especially those on the margins

Supporting and resourcing faith development

Committing ourselves to care for the earth and sustainability

Grounding all we do as communities in the mission and ministry of Jesus



Building Hope: The Principles which inform our Pastoral Strategy

1. **Jesus Christ** is the foundation and centre of our mission and ministry.
2. **Baptism** gives us our vocation as brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ respecting the different yet complementary roles of lay, consecrated and ordained people.
3. **Consultation**, collaboration, listening and discernment lead to a culture of dialogue, solidarity and openness.
4. **Active participation** of the People of God – clergy, religious and lay people – must be facilitated. It is essential to the life, leadership and decision-making of the Archdiocese and parishes.
5. **Inclusiveness** inspires the mission of the parish so that all may know the embrace of God's love.
6. **Women's role** in the life of the Church, and the sense of marginalisation expressed by many women, must be recognised and addressed to ensure their full participation at both central and local levels.
7. **The engagement of Young People** in the life of the Church begins with recognising their needs and appreciating their contribution. A commitment to developing and supporting peer ministry is necessary for this engagement.
8. **Shaping change** on a 'bottom up' not 'top down' basis respects the differences of context, history and capacity across the diocese. The 'nothing about us, without discerning with us' is the core approach of this strategy.
9. **Training**, support and care for all who are involved in ministry and volunteering across the diocese must be a priority.
10. **People on the margins and disaffected** are included, accompanied and have their voices heard.
11. **Care of the earth** and the cry of the poor call us to an appropriate response shown by our words and actions.
12. **Diocesan resource allocation** supports those parishes in greatest need.



Parish Partnerships, Initial Phase: Process and Timeline

Holy Week:
Begins
April 10

- Chairs of parish pastoral councils and parish finance committees (or their representatives) attend the Chrism Mass.
- Launch of the Initial Phase of the *Building Hope* dialogue and discernment towards parish renewal.

First week of
Easter: Begins
April 17

- Pastoral Letter from the Archbishop, *Living the Hope of Easter*, read and made widely available in parish.

Second and
third week
of Easter:
April 24
to May 7

- Parish prays the *Building Hope* Prayer as we begin this first phase of *Building Hope* towards parish renewal.
- Parish team, parish pastoral council and parish finance committee gathers to form together the **Parish Building Hope Leadership Group**. The Chair of the PPC or another person chosen in their place for this role, should chair the Parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group.
- The group reflects prayerfully together on the Archdiocese of Dublin Statement of Mission and the [Building Hope Task Force Report](#).
- Then the group reviews the parish profile data and resources provided and, in synodal manner, reaches a broad understanding of the direction of its response. Before coming to a final partnership determination, the parish profile material is shared widely and at a parish gathering. This is a very important part of the process intended to encourage as many parishioners as would wish to join in the dialogue and discernment.
- The Parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group invites local animators and asks them to register on buildinghope@dublindiocese.ie.
- Together they agree an appropriate date, suggested in the fifth and sixth week of Easter (May 15 to May 28), for a **Building Hope Parish Gathering**.

**Fourth Week
Of Easter:
Begins May 8**

- Parish continues to pray the *Building Hope* Prayer.
- The parish profile data is circulated widely within the parish with an Invitation to the *Building Hope* Parish Gathering.
- Members of the PPC and the PFC are encouraged to participate as group members or leaders at the parish gathering.
- Animators and small group leaders' training and preparation takes place.

**Fifth and
sixth week
of Easter:
May 15 to
May 28**

- Parish continues to pray the *Building Hope* Prayer.
- The *Building Hope* Parish Gathering is led by the Chair of the Parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group along with the animator(s).
- A PowerPoint will be provided to guide the process, the dialogue and the discernment.
- Each small group leader records the response of their group in paper format (provided).
- The responses are collected for further review by the parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group.

**Seventh week
of Easter:
Begins May 29**

- During the period between Ascension through Pentecost and continuing to the Feast of Mary, Mother of the Church, a week of prayer to the Holy Spirit for the renewal of the Church in Dublin will take place in every parish in the Archdiocese.
- In that same week, parish responses are reviewed by the parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group.
- Parish Team leaders, along with the chairs of the parish pastoral councils and parish finance committees, are encouraged to meet with other local parish leaders to discuss possible parish partnership.

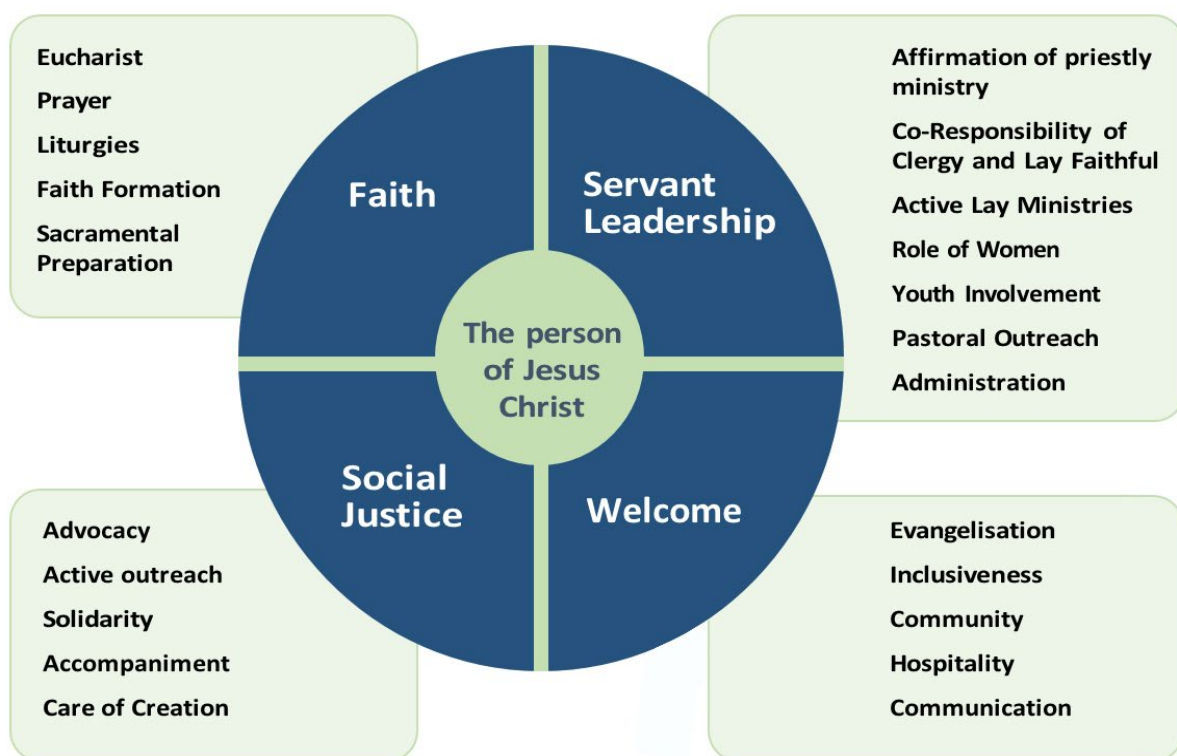
**Pentecost
to Corpus
Christi:
June 5 to
June 19**

- Parish continues to pray the *Building Hope* Prayer
- One parish submission via digital response is made by the Chair of either the PPC or the Parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group.
- The submission will form the basis of a report to Archbishop Farrell and will also be shared with the wider parish community with further discussions taking place in the autumn and beyond.

Building Hope Response Form

The consultation process undertaken by the *Building Hope* Task Force in 2021 highlighted the key dimensions valued by people in their faith communities which provide a framework for pastoral renewal within and among parishes.

The framework gives a focus for the discussions and discernment around pastoral renewal which all parishes will now undertake. It will shape the strategic plan at diocesan and parish levels.



Please take some time to reflect on each the four key dimensions of the *Building Hope* Framework for Pastoral Renewal, above. You are then invited to respond to the following questions.

Questions 1 to 3 will be answered on the online form

Faith

4. Looking at the FAITH dimension, what is working well in your parish?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eucharist | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Formation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacramental Preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liturgies | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

5. Why?

6. Looking at the FAITH dimension, what is in need of development in your parish?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eucharist | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Formation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacramental Preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liturgies | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

7. In what way?

Servant Leadership

8. Looking at the dimension of SERVANT LEADERSHIP, what is working well in your parish?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affirmation of priestly ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Responsibility of Clergy and Lay Faithful | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Lay Ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Role of Women | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

9. Why?

10. Looking at the dimension of SERVANT LEADERSHIP, what is in need of development in your parish?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affirmation of priestly ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Responsibility of Clergy and Lay Faithful | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Lay Ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Role of Women | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

11. In what way?

Welcome

12. Looking at the WELCOME dimension, what is working well in your parish?

- Evangelisation
- Inclusiveness
- Community

- Hospitality
- Communication
- Other: _____

13. Why?

14. Looking at the WELCOME dimension, what is in need of development in your parish?

- Evangelisation
- Inclusiveness
- Community

- Hospitality
- Communication
- Other: _____

15. In what way?

Social Justice

16. Looking at the SOCIAL JUSTICE dimension, what is working well in your parish?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Accompaniment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Care of Creation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solidarity | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

17. Why?

18. Looking at the SOCIAL JUSTICE dimension, what is in need of development in your parish?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Accompaniment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Care of Creation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solidarity | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

19. In what way?

Partnerships for *Building Hope*

20. Of the strengths you have identified in your parish, which could be shared in a local parish partnership?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

21. With which three, four or five parishes would it make good sense for your parish to be in local partnership?

22. Your own parish name:

23. Additional comments

The material you submit here suggesting possible parish partnerships will be considered firstly by your local parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group, following which, each parish's submission will be collated by the diocesan *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group and presented to Archbishop Farrell for his consideration. Further discussion will take place with parishes in the autumn.

Following through on the *Building Hope* Task Force Report, all the material submitted will give focus for further discussion and discernment around pastoral renewal at both parish and diocesan levels.

The *Building Hope* Prayer

Pilgrim God, we give you thanks and praise.

You constantly journey with us
even in our darkness and doubts.

We seek your way of loving kindness
to walk together as one family.

Open our eyes to recognise you
in the faces of one another,
in the breaking of bread
and in the splendour of creation.

May the risen Christ sow seeds of hope
and new life deep within us.

May our hearts and minds be filled with your Word,
bringing forth truth, justice and peace.

May the Holy Spirit working in
and through us do much more
than we can dare to imagine
as we live out our baptismal calling
in humble and loving service.

We make this our prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

St Laurence O'Toole, pray for us.

St Kevin, pray for us.

St Brigid, pray for us.