

BEING A SYNODAL PASTORAL COUNCIL



Archdiocese
of Dublin
**Office of
Mission & Ministry**

INTRODUCTION

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am happy to provide the new handbook for pastoral councils in the Archdiocese which will help everyone to work together for mission in a co-responsible, synodal way.

One of the fruits of the synodal process has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of parish pastoral councils, partnership councils and diocesan councils. All these participatory bodies provide a forum for the Church - that is all of us - to work together more fruitfully, enabling each person's particular gifts and ministries to be fully recognised and encouraged.

What unites us is prior to what divides us. What we share, thanks to our baptism and membership in the Church, is more important than the differences based on role or state in life. Together all baptised believers are the People of God. Every member has a role to play. Every member is important. All the members work towards the accomplishment of one goal: to serve the life of the Church and its mission in the world.

In the process around our Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource, 2025-2027, we made a commitment to further develop co-responsibility. In this context, I invite all pastoral councils to:

- Consider how to encourage the parish/partnership to better reflect co-responsibility in action – all the baptised walking together in faith, sharing in mission, centred on the person of Jesus Christ. (*Objective 2a, Building Hope Pastoral Resource, p. 13*)
- Further develop the role, engagement and synodality of our parish/partnership councils. (*Objective 2c, Building Hope Pastoral Resource, p. 13*)

In this handbook you will find practical ways to become a synodal pastoral council. There are also supports provided here for councils in organising and facilitating parish assemblies, gathering prayerfully with the people of the parish in a synodal manner. Being a Synodal Pastoral Council together with the wider synodal vision and the Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource, 2025-2027, will provide a generative focus for the renewal of pastoral councils throughout the Archdiocese.

Pope Leo has asked us to, “commit ourselves to building a Church that is entirely synodal, ministerial and attracted to Christ and therefore committed to serving the world” (Pope Leo, Rome 26th October 2025). I hope that this handbook will support us in becoming entirely synodal, ministerial and missionary in how we conceive of parishes and partnerships of parishes in our Archdiocese, attracting others to Christ and serving our local communities.



+ Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin



PASTORAL COUNCILS TODAY

Welcome to this new handbook which has been created so that Pastoral Councils can engage with their mission in a synodal way.

As you open this up, consider this first question as a Pastoral Council:

What would you consider to be the role of a Pastoral Council in today's Church?

This is how a recent document described the role of the Pastoral Council:

It is the function of the pastoral council to investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them ..., in the awareness that, as Pope Francis recalled, the purpose of such a Council "should not be ecclesiastical organisation but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone".

(Instruction "The pastoral conversion of the Parish community" para. 110)

Keep in mind that the word 'pastoral' is a wide ranging term inviting reflection on the many aspects of the life and the daily activities of the parish community:

sacramental celebrations

faith formation

school communities

developing parish ministries

care of the sick and housebound

serving the wider community

social outreach & care for creation



THE CALL TO REIMAGINE AND RENEW OURSELVES

Without a vision, the people perish: Proverbs 29:18

Did you know?

- All the baptised are equal in dignity
- All are called to take their place
- All the People of God are missionary disciples
- Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged
- We are not in an era of change - we are in a change of era!
- We are called to renew our vision of parish life and mission.
- Pastoral Councils are structures for growing co-responsibility and mission
- The mission of Jesus is our mission too



This is why Pope Francis called us to dream:

I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, languages and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.

Evangelii Gaudium, para. 27

Reflect on your current Pastoral Council:

- How open are you to change?
- What is changing in your parish and what needs to change?
- How is mission and mission statement communicated to the parish?
- When was the last time you revised your parish mission statement?
- How are you enabling others to take their place?
- Who in the parish is actively engaged and who is disengaged?
- What times, schedules and structures are realistic for the needs of today's Church and world?

SYNODALITY IN COUNCIL

The challenge for today is to become synodal in everything we do. This is why we have to reimagine our Pastoral Councils to become co-responsible and synodal

The idea of synodality comes from word 'synod.'

It's an old word from the Greek speaking world:

syn means 'with'

odos means 'a path'

So it's a **path** or a **journey** that the People of God take together **with** each other.

In this synodal pathway all the People of God take their part and make their own contribution using their gifts.

When we walk together as the People of God it's called synodality.



'First and foremost, synodality denotes the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. Synodality ought to be expressed in the Church's ordinary way of living and working'.

*Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church (Vatican City, March 2018), Introduction.
Adapted from Pope Francis' address at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People*

- How is this 'journeying together' happening in our parish/partnership?
- What steps are we taking as a Pastoral Council in order to grow in our journeying together?

SYNODAL AWARENESS

Being aware of the following can help us to engage more positively in the Pastoral Council in a synodal way.

Being led by God

The Pastoral Council is led by the Holy Spirit. Pastoral Councils are not about business planning. We are pilgrims and servants on a path of discernment.

Focus on the big picture

Pastoral Council is called to open up, to look around us, to see things from other points of view, and to move out in missionary outreach to the peripheries. This requires us to think long-term as well as short term, and global as well as local.

Focus on solutions

We need to appreciate where the Holy Spirit is generating life and see how we can let God work more fully. The challenges, difficulties, and hardships facing our parish and our Church are many. Focussing on solutions helps us not to be overwhelmed, discouraged, and cynical.

Journey together

The conversion and renewal of structures will come about only through us changing too. Only then might structures change. We can focus on the experience of journeying together to discern the path forward, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Dialogue with people

The Pastoral Council needs to dialogue with people with a range of experience and expertise. We must keep the bigger picture in view to fulfil our mission in the world.

Being open

We can choose the way of the Spirit by being open to the ideas of others in a spirit of openness and dialogue. When we are pressuring others to think like us this brings about division.

Dialogue with each other

We can confuse Council decision making with political debate where one side defeats the other. This is counter to the spirit of synodality.

Listening to a variety of voices

The Pastoral Council needs to develop easy ways to listen to a variety of voices in the parish. Be aware in particular to the fresh voice of the newcomers and the insights of the quieter voices.



SYNODAL DISPOSITIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN COUNCIL

These mindsets and ways of working will help you all as a Pastoral Council to be synodal.

An understanding of “journeying together”

This requires patience as we enable each other to be on a path where we discover God’s will together.



Listening to understand

- Listen to each person in turn without comment or interruption
- Be open what is being shared without judgement
- Listen to learn
- Notice when ideas are converging and diverging
- Learning from one another to better reflect the wonderful multi-faceted reality that Christ’s Church is meant to be.

Intentional speaking

- Be prepared and ready to share
- Stay on topic
- Be concise and to the point
- Speak with freedom, honesty and integrity
- Make sure everyone’s voice is heard - no one voice should dominate



An innovative outlook

- Be open to develop new approaches
- Be creative and courageous
- Step out of the way we usually do things

Be open to where the Spirit is leading us

- Be open to new ideas, methods and ways of thinking
- Notice the presence of the Spirit:
 - Is there a sense of peace and calm?
 - Is there a unity emerging?
 - Are some ideas coming together in convergence?
 - Are we noticing the quiet voices of divergence?
 - Can we find a consensus and agreement?
- Avoid labelling others and limiting their contribution



Understanding the concept of a co-responsible Church

We are being co-responsible when

- we honour the dignity and value of each baptised person
- we make decisions jointly together
- we take responsibility for progressing decision making and taking

Being inclusive

If we want everyone to take their part then we need to appreciate variety and include all those we often forget or ignore.



THE 5 Ps OF GROWING CO-RESPONSIBILITY IN PASTORAL COUNCILS

PRAYER-FILLED

- Underpinning everything is that the Pastoral Council prayerfully considers pastoral activity.
- A time of prayer is a priority at each meeting, to listen to and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- This leads to discernment of parish pastoral needs.
- Discernment leads to decision making led by the Spirit.

PASTORAL

- Pastoral Councils are called to be a caring, listening presence to the whole parish.
- They must have a holistic view of parish needs.
- They need to actively encourage every member of the parish community to take their part in pastoral life.

PARTNERSHIP

- Pastoral Councils affirm the call of baptism and the co-responsibility of ALL.
- They build relationships based on respect, cooperation & consensus.
- They also need to work alongside others as partners in mission, especially our parish partnerships.

PLANNING

- Pastoral Councils engage in Pastoral Planning for mission.
- This is aligned with the Parish Mission Statement.
- They are constantly aware of the realities of parish needs and resources and the gifts of others.
- They plan with (not for) the parish through effective communication and gatherings.

PARTICIPATION

- Pastoral Councils notice people's gifts and enable them to respond to the call of their baptism.
- They are called to transform mindsets of passivity, procrastination and preserving the way things have always been done.
- They focus on enabling everyone to take their part for mission.

YOUR ROLE IN A SYNODAL COUNCIL



Your Role as a Council Member

- How do you understand synodal journeying together?
- How do you see yourself as co-responsible?
- In what way/s do you come to synodal decisions?
- What changes in mindsets and practices will help your Pastoral Council to be more synodal?



Your Role as President Priest

- How do you see yourself working co-responsibly with the Pastoral Council?
- In what way do you see yourself as enabling others to grow in responsibility?
- How are joint decisions made and ratified in the Pastoral Council in a synodal way?
- How do you help the Pastoral Council focus on Pastoral Planning and Action?



Your Role as Chair

- How does the Agenda emerge from the Pastoral Council?
- How do you enable everyone to take their part at each meeting?
- How do you help everyone to listen in order to understand?
- How do you ensure that discernment happens before agreed actions?



Your Role as Secretary

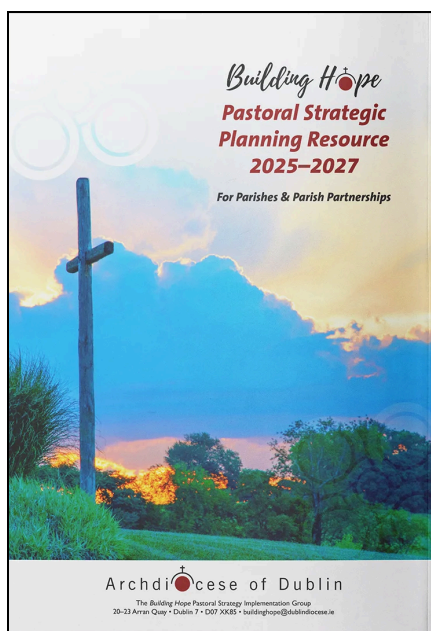
- How do your minutes record the decision making process of the Council?
- How do you effectively communicate decisions for action to the Council Members and the Parish?
- How does your role support an action based approach to the mission of the parish?

TIME TO RENEW YOUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

When PPCs were set up 2004 in the Archdiocese of Dublin, every parish took time to consider their mission. Times have changed since then, and when times change our mission changes too! It is really useful to reflect on where things are now and what God is calling us to in this change of era.

Here are some steps you can take to renew your mission statement:

- Explore your current mission statement in light of Building Hope
- Compare it with the Archdiocesan Statement of Mission (*p. 8 Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025-2027*)



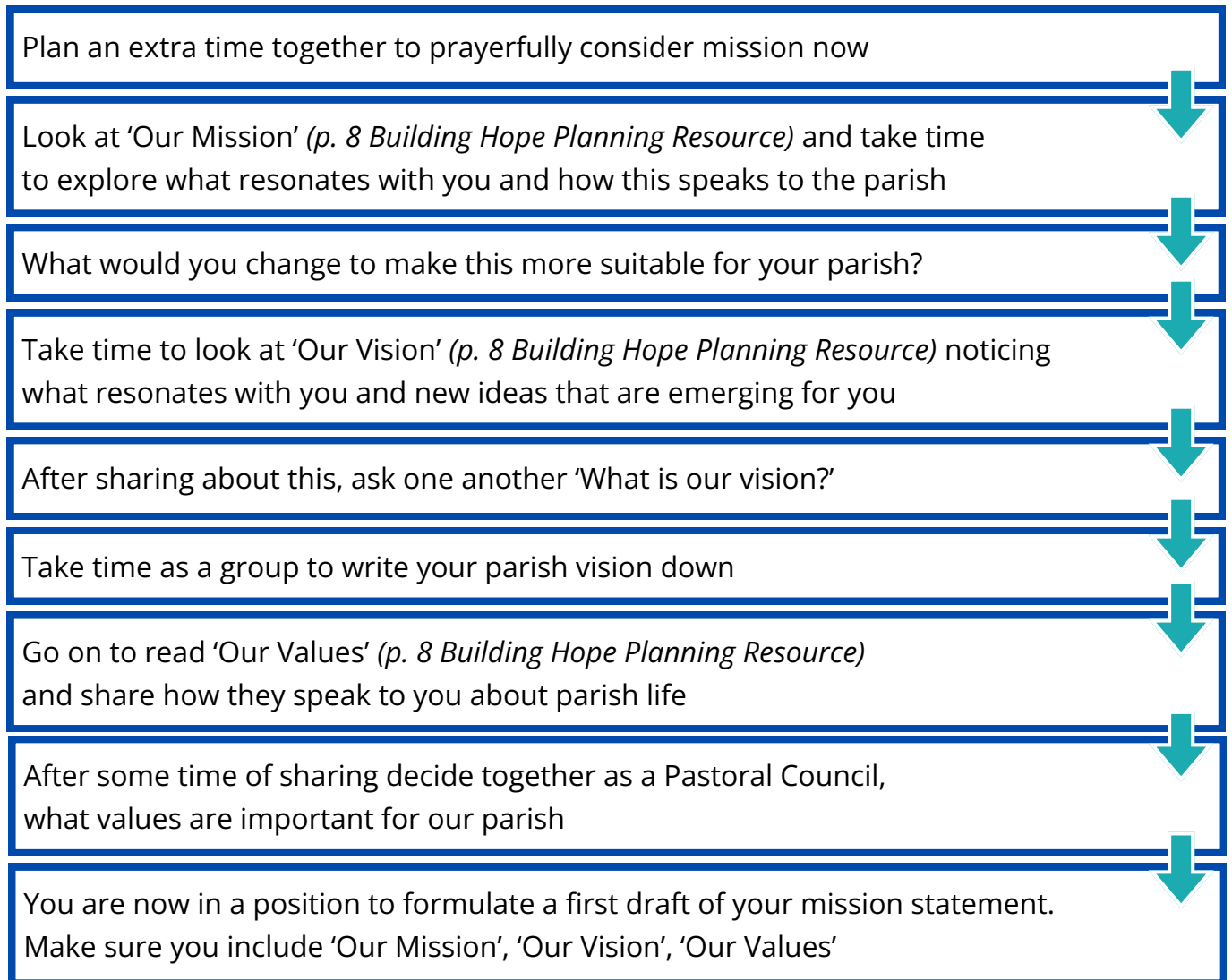
- Notice that there are statements about
 - 'Our Mission'
 - 'Our Vision'
 - 'Our Values'
- These 3 things together form the Statement of Mission
- You can use this framework to renew your parish mission statement
- Here is a simple way to do this:

FRAMEWORK TO RENEW YOUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

Set aside an extra time together to prayerfully consider mission now

Decide who will lead this time of reflective prayer

Ask the parish community to pray for you when you gather to do this

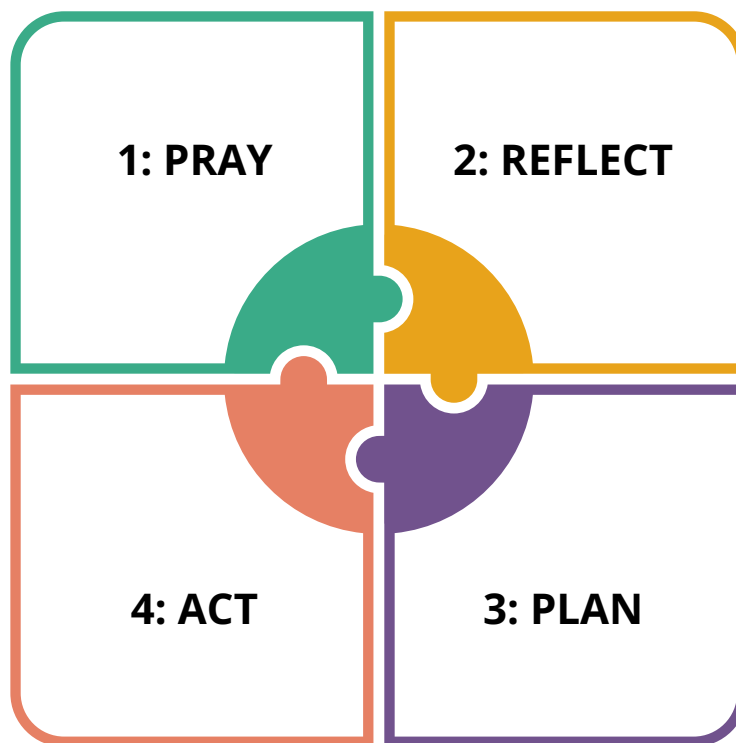


- How can you share this first draft with the parish?
- How can you take feedback and suggestions on this from people/groups in the parish?
- Only after this has happened are you ready to finalise your parish statement of mission

THE SYNODAL MODEL FOR EVERY PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

The synodal model for every Pastoral Council meeting reflects the Building Hope Pastoral Planning Cycle. (see p. 9 Building Hope Planning Resource)

This simple process ensures a synodal way of journeying together and making pastoral decisions through four moments:



Every Pastoral Council meeting should follow this 4 step process:

1. It begins with a time of prayer
2. This leads into reflection on focused pastoral issues
3. This reflection enables the Pastoral Council to plan together
4. Planning allows shared pastoral actions to be progressed



PRAY

The purpose of starting with a time of prayer is

- to remind each other this is a gathering of the People of God and not a business meeting
- to open us up to the presence of God and the prompting of the Spirit
- to make the person of Jesus and his mission central to all we do

Prayer is never a waste of time.

Prayer helps us notice where and how the Spirit is leading.

Prayer in a synodal manner implies sharing to bring unity and clarity.

Prayer in a synodal manner implies listening to understand where the Spirit is leading.

Prayer leads us to be people of discernment - and discernment leads to decision for action.

In the Pastoral Council everyone should be able to lead prayer.

Best practice ideally is that we lead in pairs.

A USEFUL SYNODAL MODEL FOR LEADING PRAYER

- There are four stages of prayer:



- Begin with praying the Synod Prayer
- Reflect on a piece of Scripture together using, for example, the Lectio Divina model
 - This method of 'sacred reading' for sharing scripture encourages us all to engage with the word of God. Its practice teaches us to listen to God and how the Spirit speaks to us through each other.
- See appendix 1 for the Synod Prayer and four stages of Lectio Divina
- End each meeting with the Building Hope Prayer

REFLECT

The purpose of a time for reflection is

- To consider together the Pastoral Priorities for the Parish.
- Remember that not everything will need to be discerned.
- To clarify how we can progress our pastoral and missionary priorities and develop them locally
- This connects to the Building Hope Pastoral Planning Process (*p. 11 Building Hope Planning Resource*)

The President, Chair and Secretary will already have provided the focus for the Pastoral Council meeting through the Agenda and any relevant preparation documents.

You should come prepared to share about the pastoral issue, keeping in mind the following:

- **How** - how will this make a difference?
- **Where** - where will this impact parish life?
- **Who** - who can be part of progressing and developing this issue?
- **Why** - why does this need to be progressed at this time?
- **What** - what steps and stages can be named for action?
- **When** - when will we meet again to review progress?

KEEP IN MIND

In what way is this building hope together in our parish or partnership?

- As a community of co-responsibility through **servant leadership**
- As a community that is active in **social justice**
- As a community of **welcome and inclusion**
- As a community that is **faith-filled**

How does your reflection on parish pastoral priorities connect with the four Building Hope focus areas?



PLAN

The purpose of planning is

- To develop the pastoral life of the parish/partnership
- To connect with the parish mission statement
- To forward the mission of the parish
- To fully name all steps and stages in order to make progress
- To name achievable actions that can be progressed
- To identify all those who can collaborate with these pastoral plans

Connecting with the Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource

You will have taken part in the Building Hope Novena at Pentecost which helps parishes focus on their priorities for the pastoral year beginning in September. In all planning we keep these priorities in mind.

General Guidelines for Planning:

1. Name the activity and the difference it is going to make
2. Name the goals and desired outcomes of your plan
3. Invite others to participate in a planning subgroup
4. Use the Guideline template (on the next page) to scope out the pastoral year and track progress

A helpful way of planning:

- You can fill in the template provided for your own parish - see example in Appendix 2
- Start with the things that are already happening - use the colour GREEN
- Add in any new pastoral initiatives - use the colour BLUE
- Make sure all your pastoral priorities are part of your Pastoral Plan
- Notice where the busy and less busy times are - can things be done at different times in the year?
- Is there anything that the parish needs to stop doing?
- Are there new initiatives that would be more beneficial?

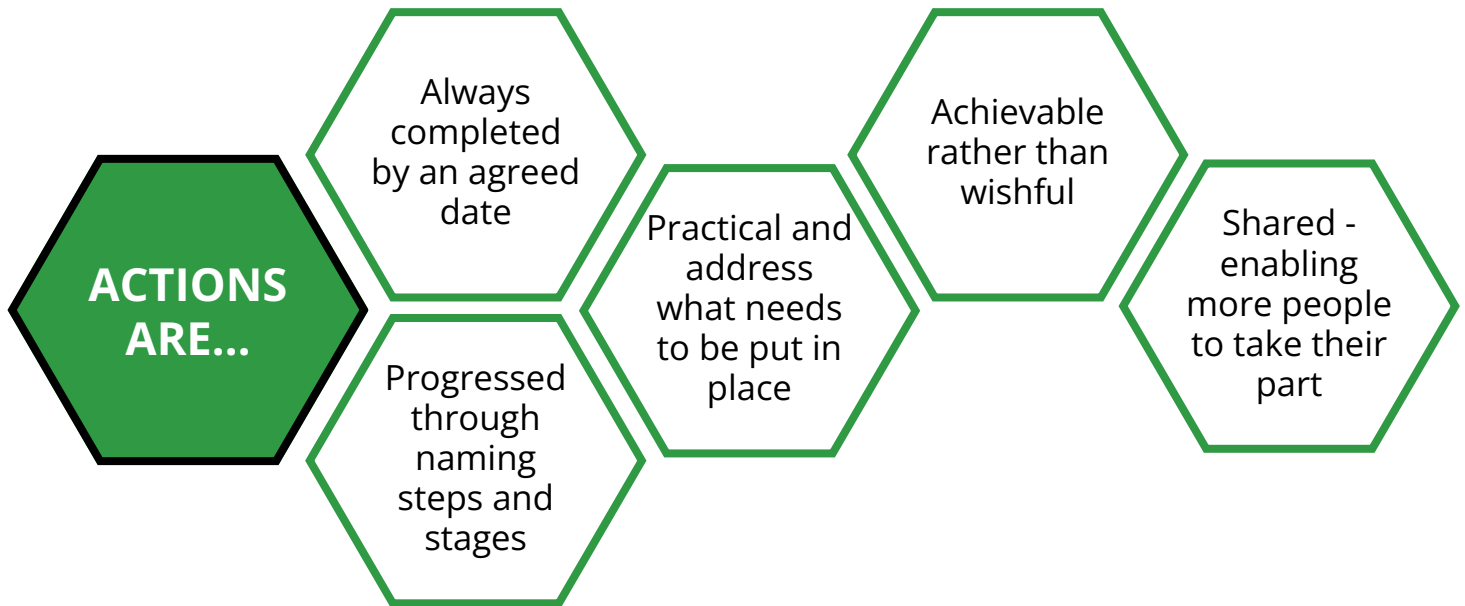
TEMPLATE FOR A PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

MONTH	SERVANT LEADERSHIP	SOCIAL JUSTICE	WELCOME & INCLUSION	FAITH FILLED
SEPTEMBER				
OCTOBER				
NOVEMBER				
DECEMBER				
JANUARY				
FEBRUARY				
MARCH				
APRIL				
MAY				
JUNE				
JULY				
AUGUST				

ACT

The purpose of the Action part of the meeting is

- To name the actions that have been agreed
- How these actions will be taken and progressed
- To clarify who is responsible for each action
- How these actions will be communicated with the parish
- To identify who can take part in leading the agreed actions
- To identify who can be called upon to be part of progressing each action



Sub Groups

- A good way to progress actions is to have Pastoral Council subgroups
- You could set up a Pastoral Council Subgroup for each of the four Building Hope Pastoral Areas
- Looking back at the Pastoral Planning Template
 - The first working subgroup could focus on **Servant Leadership** and actions related to this
 - The second working subgroup could focus on **Social Justice** and actions related to this
 - The third working subgroup could focus on **Welcome & Inclusion** and actions related to this
 - The fourth working subgroup could focus on **Faith-Filled Community** and actions related to this
- Progress can happen when these subgroups share with the whole Pastoral Council how the actions are developing



PLANNING AN ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

If we want to be a synodal pastoral council then we must get into the habit of listening to the people of the parish.

There are many ways to connect with the parish. For example, doing a survey or chatting on Facebook or having hospitality after Masses and so on.

However, the best way to connect to more people is by intentionally gathering.

When we gather the parish in an intentional way to share and listen, this is called an ASSEMBLY.

In other words, its a gathering of the People of God.



An ASSEMBLY is not

- an Annual General Meeting, like a board of directors.
- a deliberative voting group.
- a place where the Pastoral Council reads out a report.

An ASSEMBLY is

- a gathering where the Pastoral Council considers with the parish
- a listening space where a greater number of people can share in the mission of the parish and share their hopes and dreams, fears and anxieties.
- prayerful and reflective, building trusting relationships.

An ASSEMBLY can be

- INFORMATIONAL - where various parish groups share how and what they do in the parish.
- FORMATIONAL - where there is input given about a particular topic.
- TRANSFORMATIONAL - when those gathered begin to see things in a new way.

FORMAT FOR AN ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY



- **Welcome and Introduction**

- The Pastoral Council Chair welcomes everyone warmly and introduces the focus of the Assembly
- There is an invitation to listen to each other and to be open to new thoughts and ideas



- **Prayerful Reflection**

- Two members of the Council lead some prayer, connecting to the focus
- People are in small groups during the prayer



- **Small Group Synodal Sharing**

- Pastoral Council members invite the Assembly to consider a question
- Every small group has a leader and a notetaker
- There is a first large group sharing as all listen to what is emerging



- **Tea and Coffee break**

- During a break all are invited to reflect on what has emerged



- **Small Group Synodal Sharing**

- Pastoral Council members invite the Assembly to consider what is emerging more deeply and listen to each other in the small groups.



- **Gathering the Wisdom**

- Pastoral Council members feedback what is emerging and what they can take to their meetings for action.



- **Final Prayer Moment**

- The President and the Chair thank all for sharing and end with a short prayer time.

YOUR TOOLKIT FOR YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

SYNOD

- Final Synod Report Oct 2024 https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf
- Baptised and Sent (Irish bishops document) <https://synod.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Baptised-and-Sent-Preparatory-Document-for-the-Pre-Synodal-Assembly-Being-Held-in-Kilkenny-on-18th-October-2025.pdf>
- Conversation in the Spirit <https://synod.ie/conversations-in-the-spirit/>
- Simply Synod <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/simply-synod-resource/>
- Universal Synod www.synod.va
- Irish National Synod: www.synod.ie

PASTORAL COUNCILS

- The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html>
- Becoming a Pastoral Parish Council by Patricia Carroll - Messenger Publication
- Voluntary Ministry Matters <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Voluntary-Ministry-Guidebook.pdf>
- Building Hope Strategic Planning Resource, 2025-2027 <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/PlanningResource.pdf>

PARISH SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

- Accompanying Families Policy <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Accompanying-Families-Diocesan-Policy.pdf>
- Called by God Baptism Resource <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/missionministry/accompanying-families/baptism/>
- Rejoice and Give Thanks: Reconciliation and Communion Resource <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/missionministry/accompanying-families/rejoice-give-thanks/>
- Confirmation Connect <https://www.dublindiocese.ie/missionministry/youth-young-adults/confirmation-connect/>



APPENDIX 1

SYNOD PRAYER

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen.

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.

LECTIO DIVINA: A way to pray

This method of 'sacred reading' for sharing scripture encourages us all to engage with the word of God. Its practice teaches us to listen to God and how the Spirit speaks to us through each other.

There are four stages of reflection:

- **READING** the Passage out loud
 - You can use the scripture of the day
 - The scripture can be read twice (with silence in between) by two different voices
- **REFLECTING** on its meaning for my life
 - Take time for people to share a word or a phrase that strikes them from the scripture - everyone else just listens to this
 - For bigger groups, people can break into smaller groups
- **RESPONDING** in prayer to the message that is given
 - Is there anything we need to bring to prayer from what has been shared?
- **RESTING** in contemplative silence
 - Having a moment to simply be together in the presence of God



APPENDIX 2

TEMPLATE FOR A PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

Here's an example from one parish. Notice the new initiatives and the gaps.

MONTH	SERVANT LEADERSHIP	SOCIAL JUSTICE	WELCOME & INCLUSION	FAITH FILLED
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning of parish catechists PPC monthly meetings begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of new Parish SVP members Celebrate Season of Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blessing of school bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Family Mass begins Baptism Preparation every month Sacramental Preparation Teams in place
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training small group LENT leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate Feast of St Francis - blessing of animals Launch of Laudato Si' Award International Day of Older Persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Faith activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st Parents gathering for 1st Reconciliation
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training new Readers Recruit for January Youth Leadership Training 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Faith activity Visitation of the sick and housebound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat evening for Funeral Ministers Memorial Liturgy for those who have died
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat evening for parish catechists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish initiative for disadvantaged at Christmas World Aids Day Migrants Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Faith activity Mass for all the new Irish in the Parish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advent small faith sharing groups
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training small group LENT leaders Commissioning of Readers on Sunday of Word of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate World Day of Social Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st Parents gathering for 1st Reconciliation
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baptism Team renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish engagement in Trocaire campaign Lenten Lunch club in parish centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Faith activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family LENT Reconciliation Service 1st Parents gathering for 1st Communion
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit new members for the Funeral Ministry Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lenten Lunch club in parish centre Remember Slave Victims/Slave Trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Faith activity Visitation of the sick and housebound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lent small faith sharing groups
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin planning for PPC led Parish Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care for parish grounds as part of Earth Day celebrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Faith activity Welcome Liturgy for newly baptised adult Catholics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Easter Retreat Week 1st Parents gathering for 1st Communion
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of new Ministers of Holy Communion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Adult visit to Capuchin Day Centre 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration of Holy Communion Novena of Prayer to Holy Spirit
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning of new Ministers of Holy Communion Parish Assembly led by PPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Adult fundraiser for local homeless charity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Fun Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration of Confirmations Registration opens for Holy Communion
JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ministries are in place for the summer months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Adult walk in cafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents holiday support group Visitation of the sick and housebound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership pilgrimage to Glendalough
AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of Sacramental Preparation Teams begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate International Youth Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate Grandparents Day Visitation of the sick and housebound 	

CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT

Conversation in the Spirit is a very useful method when decisions need to be made in a discerning manner.

Not everything needs to be discerned. We also make ordinary practical decisions at council meetings.

However, when there are big decisions about new directions or initiatives, this is when Conversation in the Spirit helps us to make wise decisions together.

Here discernment leads to decision making that progresses decision taking.

Begin with a few moments of silence/prayer to allow ourselves to ponder the question.

First round of conversation:

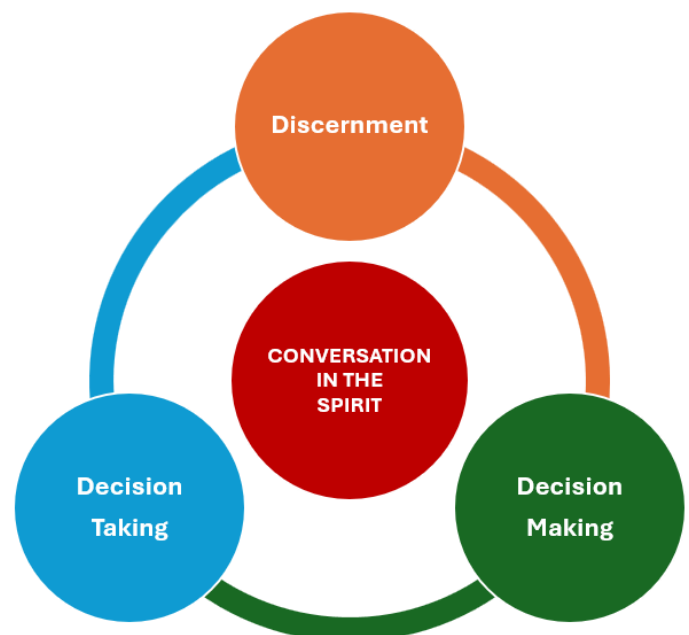
Each person has a chance to speak. There is no discussion in this round, and there is a time of silence to allow for reflection.

Second round of conversation:

Share what struck you most or what resonated for you in the first round and what moved you during the time of silence. Once again this is followed by a pause for reflection.

Third round of conversation:

Finally in the third round participants reflect on what moved them most deeply. What new insights arise? What are the common themes or fruits of the conversations?



For more information visit:

<https://synod.ie/conversations-in-the-spirit/>

“Let us commit ourselves
to building a Church
that is entirely synodal,
ministerial and attracted to Christ
and therefore committed
to serving the world.”

*Pope Leo
26th October 2025*



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