



## Building Hope - Our Call to Action

### Introduction to the Report of the Diocesan Task Force

*'For now, what we need is the chance to change, to make space for the new thing we need'* (Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream.*)

As we emerge from the Covid-19 crisis, there is a deep and widespread desire to re-establish our sense of belonging to a community of faith, but there is no future in going back unthinkingly to a pre-Covid practice. The model of church as we have known it is not the model that will best serve us in the future.

We are like the disciples walking on the road to Emmaus (cf. Luke 24:13-35). As a Task Force, we discern the presence of the Lord walking by our sides – pointing us again to the truth of the Resurrection – to the life-changing call to encounter Him anew – to be the members of his body, the Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin today.

We need to be brave in reimagining our Church so that it will continue to inspire and support a living faith in a secularised society. The challenges of the pandemic provide an opportunity to recommit to the renewal of the Church in its mission to reveal God's love in Christ.

3,000 people, mostly lay faithful, responded to our invitation to share their views and among them was widespread acceptance of the need for change. Repeated expressions of goodwill to Archbishop Farrell and exhortations to him to 'be brave' in the decisions being made for the future of the Archdiocese give witness to this. The clergy and lay faithful together are ready for change, maybe more so than some might expect.

While we were very encouraged by these responses, we are conscious that our ability to reach people living in poverty, feeling unwelcome, unloved or unknown, marginalised, excluded or alienated, was unavoidably limited. A wider consultation at diocese and parish level will be required to hear more voices.

We also acknowledge that some issues raised in the consultation are beyond the scope of this Task Force and thus are not reflected in this strategy. We have, however, faithfully read every submission, and carefully considered the views expressed in the consultation which are within our remit.

The themes which emerged from the consultation demonstrated the many facets of hope to be found in the life of the Church, including sacraments, liturgy, faith formation, community, prayer, leadership and social justice initiatives. These themes provide a framework for the development of a pastoral strategy.

#### **There are three elements to our pastoral strategy:**

- a set of principles which should guide the approach at both diocesan and parish levels
- a process involving engagement between the diocese and individual parishes, and within individual parish communities.
- a framework to guide the process of discussion and discernment by parish communities

Throughout this Report, when we speak of parishes, we are also talking of other faith communities with their distinctive charisms: religious communities, hospitals, schools, prisons, social services, chaplaincies.

**This pastoral strategy is a starting point, but one which clearly acknowledges the need to:**

- hear the call to conversion of hearts and minds
- deepen the spirit of prayer and attentiveness to the Word of God
- re-imagine diocesan and parish structures
- enthuse the community of faith
- reach out to those who have stopped attending church, have been hurt or disaffected by the past actions of members of our Church, and to people living on the margins of society.

In the words of Archbishop Farrell, the pastoral strategy is to support parish communities to undertake a radical renewal, looking to the future with creativity.

Mindful of the synodal path on which the Church in Ireland has embarked, we are hopeful that our work and strategy will provide a useful input to this path in the Archdiocese.

Renewal begins in reflection and prayer and conversion, if it is to inspire and support a living faith. Above all, change must grow from an ongoing discernment on the lived experience of the people in faithfulness to Christ. (Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, paras 166 -175).

Encounter with Jesus is the goal and touchstone of this strategy because, in the words of Pope Benedict, it is only this which, for a Christian, “gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction”. In Baptism we are united with Him and drawn to His love (Eph 4:5-7).

We walk with Him, in the words of Pope Francis, as Fratelli Tutti – brothers and sisters all - “that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person.” We are sent out by Him to be his disciples in the world (Mark 6:7-13). His Word inspires our actions and commitments

### **A Concluding Parish Note—A Call to All**

In the conclusion to the report the Task Force writes: "We ask that parish conversations continue to expand our horizons, and to guide our Synodal path and our faith in tomorrow." St Mary's is a richly varied parish with a breadth of experience, and it has a lot to contribute to the Synodal process our diocese is undertaking. The PPC and the Education Committee, as well as the wider community and other chaplaincies and groups in the parish, bring their own experience and are called to play an important role in this open process.

In Luke 5:1-11, the Gospel writer creatively combines the preaching of Jesus, a miracle and a call story. Luke invites us to recognise our own attraction to Jesus and the Good News. In the context of the Synodal Pathways — certain expressions jump off the page: the word of God, put out into the deep, do not be afraid We should not be afraid to put out into the deep, both personally and as a community of faith. We pray to the Holy Spirit, that the Christian community may be full of courage as it gathers together on the Synodal Pathway.



The **ANNUAL COLLECTION** for **ACCORD Dublin**, the Diocesan Agency for Marriage and the Family will be made at all Masses on the weekend of **12&13 February**

**ACCORD Dublin throughout the Diocese offers:**

- ◊ Marriage Preparation Courses
- ◊ Counselling for couples and individuals experiencing difficulties in their relationships, currently online or by phone
- ◊ A Relationship and Sexuality Programme for schools

**ACCORD Dublin needs your support this year more than ever.**

**Please give generously on 12&13 February**

### **Masses Times**

**Sundays:** Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm

Croatian Community Mass 6.30pm

French-speaking community mass 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 12.30

Daily masses 10am only for the moment

**-Rosary** daily after 10am mass

### **Baptisms:**

1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, request forms available from parish office

### **Marriages**

For the use of St Mary's Church and Pre-Nuptial Enquiries please contact the Parish Office

Parish Office open Monday—Friday, 10.30-14.00

### **IN MEMORIAM**

**+**

6 February

11am: Catherine McWilliams, Anniversary