



Building Hope
**Pastoral Strategic
Planning Resource
2025–2027**

For Parishes & Parish Partnerships



Archdiocese of Dublin

The *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group
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Building Hope with Open Hearts

Pastoral Letter – Archbishop Dermot Farrell

JESUS' CONCERN IS FOR OUR HEARTS... he seeks to draw us close, heart-to-heart with him. 'Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Mt 11:28). Jesus calls us to closeness with God, into intimacy with the One who gives us life, and invites us into the relationship that brings us into fullness of life (see Jn 10:10). It is in the depth of our hearts (see Mk 7:6) that we meet God as we respond to the mysteries of life, and are brought into silence and wonder.

This relationship is the deeper – one might say, sacred – foundation of our life in the Church. With Christ – through him, and with him, and in him – we live out the gospel, we live out of the words and actions of Jesus that have been handed on to us.

This relationship with Jesus is also the foundation of *Building Hope*, as we've been calling our journey of renewal in the Archdiocese of Dublin: as people of faith, 'encounter with the person of Jesus makes us who we are, and shapes what we do'. ([Statement of Mission](#), February 2022).

It is in this context that I speak to you today about the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027*. After three years of prayer, reflection and tentative action, this Planning Resource brings us to a significant new phase of *Building Hope*. It asks of us an 'open heart', open to Christ and to his Spirit, as together, we seek to build our partnerships of parishes – *Building Hope with Open Hearts*. These materials are the result of broad consultation and dialogue, prayer, reflection, action, and further reflection, undertaken in parishes and partnerships of parishes. I ask you all to join with me in using the resources developed here, as you explore creative and courageous ways to renew the Church in our diocese.

In order to support this initiative in the coming weeks, Workshops associated with the *Building Hope* Planning Resource, which I ask parish leaders to attend, will seek to guide us, using a synodal method of PRAYER – REFLECTION – PLANNING, taking action together in parishes and partnerships of parishes over the coming three years, 2025–2027. In engaging with this resource, we are called to encourage each other. This will mean moving beyond certain worries that we understandably have, as well as facing up to the 'resistance' that often surfaces when we need to change. This is the vision of *Building Hope with Open Hearts*.

In his letter for the World Day of Prayer for Creation, published today (1 September 2024), Pope Francis puts it this way: 'As people who dare to dream, we must dream with our eyes wide open, impelled by a desire for love, fraternity, friendship and justice for all' (Pope Francis, [Hope and Act with Creation](#), 2). As he always does, the Holy Father underlines how the Holy Spirit guides us 'in embracing the humility of those who care for others and for all of creation.' ([Hope and Act with Creation](#), 5).

Strange as it may be to our ears: nothing fruitful happens in the Church without the Holy Spirit (see Second Vatican Council, [Lumen Gentium](#) – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 4, and Saint John Paul II, [Redemptoris Missio](#), 18). Nothing changes for the good without the Holy Spirit, 'the Lord, the giver of life,' as



we constantly pray in the Creed. We have much to learn in this respect. When we look at the story of the early Church, in the Acts of the Apostles, or in the letters of Saint Paul, we see ‘that the true protagonist in the history of the church is the Holy Spirit... Opening up to listen to the Spirit is not about detecting rare and subtle signals; it means looking at how, in concrete terms, the gospel challenges [our] life,’ our way of being with each other in our parishes and in the world (see Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça, *The Mysticism of the Present Moment* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2021), p. 111).

Our faith calls us to open our hearts, not only to renewing our own commitment to Christ, but to rediscovering our parishes and partnerships of parishes as places of mission. It is the whole Church that is missionary, not just priests and religious (see Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* – Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, especially 1–2). Long before the Second Vatican Council, this was one of the great insights of Frank Duff, a man of profound faith, and a Dubliner through and through. As we pray in our *Building Hope Prayer*: ‘May our hearts and minds be filled with your Word, bringing forth truth, justice and peace.’

In all our parishes, in every parish of this Diocese, there are vibrant communities who live out the gospel, who live out of the words and actions of Jesus that have been handed on to us. Those vibrant communities may now be small, but smallness is not the issue. Smallness was never an issue for Jesus, and smallness is never an issue for his heavenly Father, with whom he is one (see Jn 10:30): ‘Do not be afraid, little flock...’ (Lk 12:32). Remember “the Mustard Seed... *the smallest of all seeds...*” (Mt 13:31–32)! Smallness is not an issue for the Father of Jesus, because the Creator sees the potential in what He has created: God sees what things can be. God looks at what creation can give, what all can become.

The Church in Europe finds itself in a time, both of decline and of new beginning. The decline is there for all to see. However, Christ calls people of faith to look at the Church from the standpoint of his Father. Let us look at the Church – and the world – with the eyes of God. Smallness is not an end-point, but a beginning. This is how the Church began. It is always how the Church begins. Let us find our way, step-by-step, working more deeply together, as we build our partnerships of parishes, embracing the road the Spirit is bringing us on, in such a way that, as Pope Francis says, ‘our lives can become a song of love for God, for humanity, with and for creation’ (*Hope and Act with Creation*, 9).

May God who has begun this good work in us bring it to completion.



Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin
 1 September 2024

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Building Hope



Pentecost, by Jen N

Archdiocese of Dublin

*Building Hope through
Prayer, Reflection and Planning*

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.

Archdiocese of Dublin

Building Hope through Prayer, Reflection and Planning

A. Introduction

This **Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027 for Parishes and Parish Partnerships** launches a significant phase of the *Building Hope* pastoral renewal initiative. It is time now for us to focus our collective attention on specific actions, which we will undertake together in parish/partnership across the Archdiocese over the next three years. At the heart of the Christian life and of our Mission, is **encounter with Jesus**. Our *Building Hope* actions stem from that personal encounter building communities of CO-RESPONSIBILITY through SERVANT LEADERSHIP, communities that are active in SOCIAL JUSTICE, communities of WELCOME & INCLUSION, communities that are FAITH-FILLED, centred on the Person of Jesus Christ.

This pastoral planning resource and the actions outlined here are drawn from **consultation, dialogue and discernment** with you in parish as our *Building Hope* conversations have evolved over the last three years. You will recognise this in the emphasis, here, on some themes which we reflected on together in recent times, for example, voluntary ministry, co-responsible servant leadership, funeral ministry and social justice.

I invite you to pray the *Building Hope Prayer* frequently as you read through this resource, as you reflect upon it and begin to put it into action... opening your heart to what the Lord might be asking of you and your faith community today as we walk together as one **synodal and missionary Church**, welcoming the creative work of the Holy Spirit among us and with us.

We place our trust in the loving kindness of God:

- planning pastoral actions together to build up faith-filled communities of co-responsible servant leadership, with a central focus on social justice;
- planning pastoral actions together to become more fully a people of welcome and compassion, who embody the power, hope and joy of the gospel;
- planning pastoral actions together to better accompany all people, including families, children, young people, those marginalized or who feel themselves excluded.

And in all we plan together, we remain open to the Spirit, listening to where the Spirit is calling us.

Beginning in Autumn 2024, at our **Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Workshops**, we will prepare to use this flexible planning resource for the next three years, 2025–2027. As a community of faith we will explore this resource so we become familiar with it. **We will PRAY together, REFLECT together, PLAN together** for its implementation in parishes and partnerships of parishes across the Archdiocese.

We will need to take co-ordinated action together, encouraging and supporting each other, continually opening our hearts to renewal and new beginnings

May the Lord bless us as we rediscover hope, proclaim hope and build hope together.

Very Rev Gareth Byrne, VG
Moderator of the Diocesan Curia
Chairperson, *Building Hope Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group*

Archdiocese of Dublin



B. Who We Are

The Parishes & Parish Partnerships of the Archdiocese of Dublin

The Archdiocese of Dublin covers an area of some 100 kilometres of the mid-eastern coast of Ireland, and extends inland over seventy kilometres. The entire county of Dublin forms a substantial part of the diocese along with most of Wicklow, considerable sections of Kildare in addition to sections of Carlow, Wexford and Laois.

The diocese is structured into five pastoral areas within which are fifteen deaneries nurturing fifty-three partnerships of parishes – together a Catholic population recorded in the 2022 census as 996,000 people within a total population of approximately 1.6 million people.

A Synodal & Missionary Church: walking together, open to the Holy Spirit

‘Pope Francis is offering us a way of being church, the synodal pathway, of walking together more closely and being a church that is hope-filled, despite many challenges.’

Archbishop Dermot Farrell

‘In the one People of God, therefore, let us journey together, in order to experience a Church that receives and lives this gift of unity, and is open to the voice of the Spirit.’

Pope Francis



The *Building Hope* Principles inform all we do

The *Building Hope* principles, drawn from the [Task Force Report](#), inform all we do in undertaking together initiatives and actions towards building up communities of faith, growing in our understanding and practice of co-responsible servant leadership, welcoming and including all, promoting social justice and the care of creation.

Building Hope

INFORMING PRINCIPLES

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.

Our 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.

Our Vision

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**.

Our Values

1 Continuously opening ourselves to the challenges and opportunities provided by change.

2 Building a culture of dialogue, discernment and solidarity.

3 Actively participating together as baptised People of God.

4 Working alongside each other to effect renewal.

5 Including and accompanying all, especially those on the margins.

6 Supporting and resourcing faith development.

7 Committing ourselves to care for the earth and sustainability.

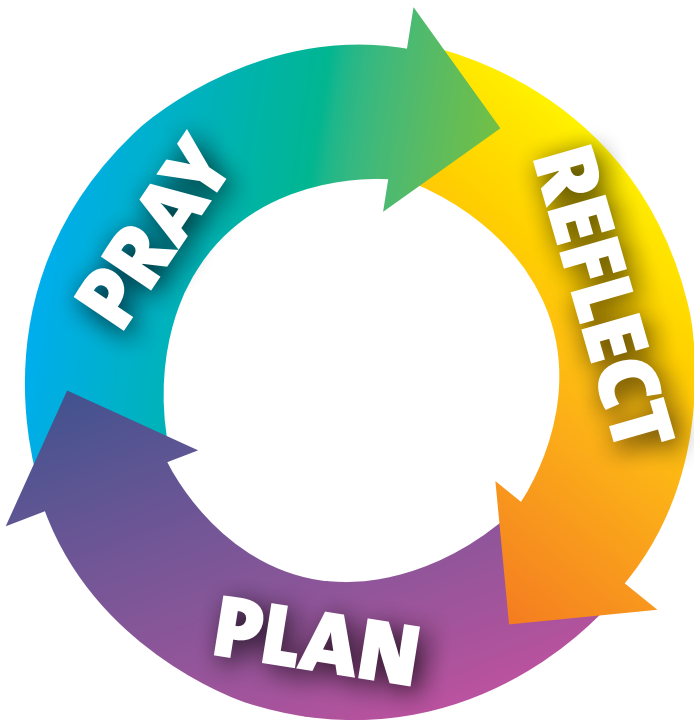
8 Grounding all we do as communities in the mission and ministry of Jesus.



Our Pastoral Planning Cycle

Now, in Autumn 2024, we begin a pastoral planning cycle looking ahead to the three-year period 2025–2027.

In doing so we **PRAY** together, **REFLECT** together, **PLAN** together – a cyclical process which encourages us to remain open to the Spirit, listening to where the Spirit is calling us, and welcoming the creative work of the Holy Spirit among us.



Drawing from the previous three-year period of consultation, dialogue and discernment in parishes and partnerships across the Archdiocese as our *Building Hope* conversations have evolved, we:

1. recall the four strategic **FOCUS** areas drawn from the Framework for Pastoral Renewal,
2. progress our **OBJECTIVES** for the three-year period 2025–2027,
3. begin together to discern and plan pastoral **ACTIONS** which can be implemented locally and which proclaim the joy of the gospel in a way that touches peoples' hearts and lives.

‘Our faith calls us to open our hearts, not only to renewing our own commitment to Christ, but to rediscovering our parishes and partnerships of parishes as places of mission.’

Archbishop Farrell



C. Our **FOCUS** → **OBJECTIVES** → **ACTIONS**

Focus

Our pastoral and missionary priorities over the years 2025–2027 will continue to develop locally the four strategic focus areas drawn from the [Framework for Pastoral Renewal](#).

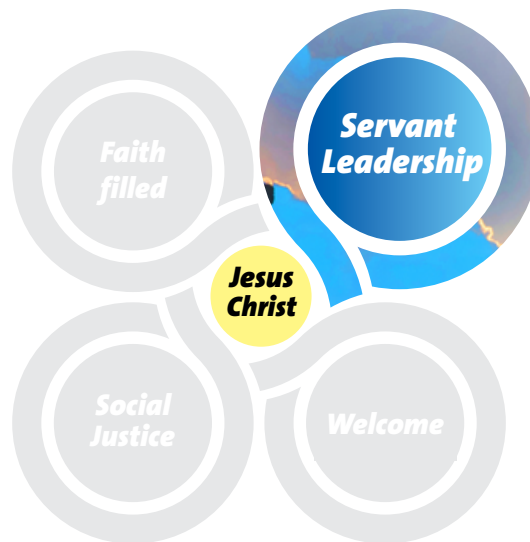


Working together across the Archdiocese, we will build up together communities centred on the person of Jesus Christ...

1. Communities of CO-RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH SERVANT LEADERSHIP
2. Communities that are ACTIVE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE
3. Communities of WELCOME AND INCLUSION
4. Communities that are FAITH-FILLED

FOCUS 1

Building Communities of CO-RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH SERVANT LEADERSHIP



OBJECTIVES

1. Affirm and support co-responsible **PRIESTLY MINISTRY** – a 21st Century model reimagining sacramental and pastoral ministry in its unity of celebration and diversity of vocations, charisms and ministries.
2. Actively include women and men in all areas of pastoral ministry reflecting differentiated* **CO-RESPONSIBLE SERVANT LEADERSHIP** in action.
3. Develop and grow **TEAM-BASED MINISTRIES** in our parish partnerships.
4. Establish a **FUNERAL MINISTRY** team where one does not currently exist, or seek to expand and develop it where it does, providing at least two trained and commissioned lay funeral ministry leaders within the partnership.

*differentiated in accordance with their rich variety of gifts and roles



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: CO-RESPONSIBLE PRIESTLY MINISTRY

- a) Affirm and support **co-responsible priestly ministry*** in the parish partnership through prayer, friendship, collaboration, gratitude and ongoing formation.
- b) Constantly review priestly ministry in the parish partnership. Consider how the parish/partnership would function with one priest.
- c) Reflect together on how to foster a culture of servant leadership and service - vocation to the priesthood, diaconate and all ministries – within our changing culture. Pray for all in ministry.

*where those who are called to ordained ministry live ‘in a disposition of proximity to people, welcoming and listening to all...’, ‘in profound communion with other ministries and charisms’ (Synthesis Report, XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Rome, October 2023)

OBJECTIVE 2: CO-RESPONSIBLE LAY MINISTRY

- a) Consider how to encourage parish/partnership to better reflect **co-responsibility in action** – clergy and lay people walking together in faith, sharing in the mission, centred on the person of Jesus Christ.
- b) Fully implement PPC engagement with the [Deanery Framework](#) where membership includes one designated representative of each Parish Pastoral Council who shares the agreed common pastoral actions with their PPC.
- c) Further develop the role, engagement and synodality of our **parish/partnership pastoral councils**.
- d) Arrange for as many as possible of those in active ministry in the parish partnership, to together attend a diocesan *Servant Leadership Course* so ideas/practices can be reflected upon, implemented and supported across the partnership.

OBJECTIVE 3: ACTIVE LAY / TEAM-BASED MINISTRIES

- a) Intentionally welcome and encourage women and men to participate in all areas of parish/partnership leadership, pastoral ministry and resourcing.
- b) Ensure all PPC members take part in a diocesan Voluntary Ministry Day and together draw on the resource [Voluntary Ministry Matters: A Guidebook for Parish Pastoral Councils](#).
- c) Use the questionnaire, resources and steps outlined in Voluntary Ministry Matters, to develop and grow **team-based ministries** in parish and across partnerships.

OBJECTIVE 4: FUNERAL MINISTRY

- a) Establish a **funeral ministry** team where one does not currently exist, or seek to expand and develop it where it does, discerning who might participate in diocesan funeral leadership training.
- b) Implement the review and actions contained within the [Pastoral Aid G: Developing Funeral Ministry in our Parish Partnerships](#).
- c) Consider whether Mass or a funeral service is appropriate in each instance.
- d) Prepare the parish to conduct funeral liturgies in the absence of the priest and deacon.
- e) Ensure that there are at least two lay leaders trained and commissioned to lead funeral services across the parish partnership, in line with pastoral needs.



Pray

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.

Reflect

As I read through the section of the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027* which relates to **Co-Responsible Servant Leadership**, which actions do I think our parish/partnership could plan for and make our **immediate priority**? ...What could I do?

Plan

‘It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions.’

Pope Francis

Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our **immediate priority**:



FOCUS 2

Building Communities that are ACTIVE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE



OBJECTIVES

1. Establish an intergenerational **SOCIAL JUSTICE & CARE OF CREATION GROUP**.
2. Conduct **LOCAL PASTORAL SOCIAL ANALYSIS** to discern how we can actively outreach within our community and to those on its peripheries.
3. Make **CARE OF CREATION** a pastoral priority in the parish/partnership.
4. Offer a Lenten programme, annually, which connects with **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**.
5. Extend **ACTIVE OUTREACH** to the marginalised in the locality.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE & CARE OF CREATION GROUP

- Form an intergenerational Social Justice & Care of Creation group, actively reaching out to welcome and include all.
- Adopt ecological practices and policies in parish/partnership, undertaking an energy and sustainability review, liaising with Parish Finance Committee/Partnership Finance Forum.
- In solidarity with those who are marginalised or excluded, take practical action against injustice.
- Undertake awareness initiatives within the partnership, which may include offering educative programmes on social and climate justice, on Catholic Social Teaching and on the See-Judge-Act method of analysis – seeing social circumstances, judging them in the light of the Gospel, and acting to promote justice and improve the situations of those served.

OBJECTIVE 2: LOCAL PASTORAL SOCIAL ANALYSIS

- Revisit the parish profile, maps, census data etc. noticing new homes, new people, new families, to determine who we are now, as parish. Consider current pastoral realities given how the local community has changed structurally, culturally and demographically
- Consider how we actively reach out to young people, young families, older people, those who are alone, working where possible with local schools.
- Take notice of and connect with social services currently available in the area.
- Decide which local concerns and needs require a pastoral response.

OBJECTIVE 3: CARE OF CREATION

- Join in celebrating locally the Season of Creation - the global ecumenical celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home, which begins each year on The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (1 September) and ends on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi (4 October).
- Identify and care for 30% of parish grounds as a haven for pollinators and biodiversity, in order that it can be enjoyed in perpetuity by the whole community (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, [Returning to Nature](#), March 2023)
- Work towards an eco-congregation award as a parish or partnership (see ecumenical ECI).

OBJECTIVE 4: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- Revisit Catholic Social Teaching to familiarise with its key principles and its impact on servant leadership – ref. [DOCAT: What to do?](#)
- Offer a Lenten programme, annually, at partnership or parish level, which connects with Catholic Social Teaching & incorporates a period of preparation, implementation & reflection.

OBJECTIVE 5: ACTIVE OUTREACH

- Actively seek to accompany and support through practical action, those who are experiencing inequality and social exclusion.
- Extend active outreach to the marginalised in the locality - to those experiencing homelessness, addiction, social disadvantage, those who have been trafficked, the Travelling Community, other minorities.
- Revitalise connections with St Vincent de Paul locally and agencies local and global such as Crosscare, Trócaire.
- Show practical concern for parishes in need in the Archdiocese beyond your parish partnership.



Pray

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.

Reflect

As I read through the section of the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027* which relates to **Social Justice**, which actions do I think our parish/partnership could plan for and make our **immediate priority**? ...What could **I** do?

Plan

‘It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions.’

Pope Francis

Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our **immediate priority**:



FOCUS 3

Building Communities of WELCOME & INCLUSION



OBJECTIVES

1. Build relationships in love inviting all to meaningful, joyful encounter with Jesus Christ – **EVANGELISE**.
2. Ensure language, spaces and actions concerning faith and hope are **INCLUSIVE** and family-friendly – that they are more accessible, more embodied in the diversity of people’s experience and open to engagement with all (*Synthesis Report, XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Rome, October 2023*).
3. Establish parish **WELCOME & HOSPITALITY** team(s) where they do not currently exist, to engage with and offer hospitality to people coming to parish – building community together.
4. Actively seek individuals who may be called to minister with and learn from **YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS**, beginning/growing youth and young adult ministry in parish / partnership.
5. Develop parish/partnership communications, including a dynamic online and social media presence, focusing on internal and outward-facing **COMMUNICATION OF OUR SHARED MISSION**, the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: EVANGELISE

- Pray together. Speak of the person of Jesus you know and love – EVANGELISE – Seek not to convince, but to bear witness ‘to the beauty of the Love that has looked upon us and lifted us up’ (Pope Francis, General Audience, 11 January 2023)
- Make time to be with each other in a spirit of accompaniment conscious that we are here for others to share faith – express our joys, listen to concerns, help practically and spiritually, build relationships in love.
- Seek to include others, especially look to the peripheries of and beyond parish ‘enter into the reality of other people’s lives’ (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 270). Review annually how to reach out to people not in contact with parish, recognising the opportunities available at liturgies and other gatherings.

OBJECTIVE 2: INCLUSION

- In conjunction with the Partnership Finance Forum, conduct an annual assessment of the financial sustainability of the parish partnership’s buildings & grounds. Implement feasible improvements to make more accessible, welcoming & family-friendly.
- Regularly review newsletters, notices, posters, social media, presentation slides etc. Ensure language and imagery are welcoming, engaging and inclusive (connect with action 5c below).
- Develop an awareness and openness to diversity of background, religion, ability, experience and faith journey – seek to include, welcome, serve and learn from all.
- Practically support those seeking to join the church – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

OBJECTIVE 3: WELCOME & HOSPITALITY

- Once welcome & hospitality teams are formed, consider developing a parish ‘welcome card’, leaflet or pack – listing parish partnership liturgies, services & supports.
- Notice those ‘new to parish’ – a new residential development or those new to the locality, church or parish centre. Extend a parish welcome via invitational conversation, parish welcome event or welcome pack as appropriate.
- Welcome and offer hospitality to people coming to participate in Mass, prayer services, sacramental liturgies – baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, funeral liturgies, Christmas & Easter ceremonies or attending talks and events in the parish/partnership – building community together.

OBJECTIVE 4: YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

- Actively seek individuals who may be called to minister with and learn from youth & young adults.
- Invite young people to participate and lead in all aspects of parish life – youth groups, youth award programmes, music, choirs, altar serving, social justice and care of creation initiatives, welcoming their families especially at First Holy Communion and Confirmation celebrations.
- Consider whether it would be helpful to identify one parish in the partnership as a youth gathering space where priority would be given to peer ministry and encounter.

OBJECTIVE 5: COMMUNICATION

- Consider establishing a parish/partnership communications contact or team.
- Establish links with internal (parish, partnership and diocesan) communication teams, sharing content, imagery and messaging.
- Develop parish/partnership communications (connect with action 2b above), including a dynamic, up-to-date online website and social media presence, focusing on outward-facing communication of our shared mission, the gospel message of Jesus Christ.



Pray

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.

Reflect

As I read through the section of the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027* which relates to **Welcome & Inclusion**, which actions do I think our parish/partnership could plan for and make our **immediate priority**? ...What could I do?

Plan

‘It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions.’

Pope Francis

Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our **immediate priority**:



FOCUS 4

Building Communities that are FAITH-FILLED



OBJECTIVES

1. With an awareness of the need for ongoing **ADULT FAITH FORMATION**, help parishioners to discern participation in diocesan training programmes.
2. Assess the **FAITH DEVELOPMENT** needs of the parishes in partnership, in particular the needs of young families & children, youth (under 18), young adults (18–35).
3. **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION** – Establish practices such that those who request the sacraments of Christian initiation are accompanied by family, parish and school, in preparation for their reception and the ongoing development of their faith.
4. Celebrate the **EUCCHARISTIC & LITURGICAL MOMENTS** in the life of the faith community in spirit-filled and hopeful ways.
5. Deepen the spirit of **PRAYER** in the parish/partnership.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: ADULT FAITH FORMATION

- Help parishioners to discern participation in diocesan education and training programmes e.g. Pathways Faith Development programme, Servant Leadership course, Certificate in Catechesis etc.
- Discern whether there are particular adult faith development initiatives, which could be planned for and shared in partnership e.g. a Bible Studies group, an Advent faith programme, a faith/spirituality bookclub.

OBJECTIVE 2: FAITH DEVELOPMENT

- Plan and support the faith development needs of young families & children through e.g. Family Mass, family prayer in the home, children's liturgy, [Godly Play](#).
- Discern with young people, faith development opportunities for youth (under 18) and invite to participate in all aspects of parish life – music, choirs, altar serving, youth groups, social justice and care of creation initiatives, welcoming their families.
- Discern with and offer faith development opportunities for young adults (18-35). Consider suitable pastoral actions e.g. courses, walks/Camino/pilgrimage, social justice and care of creation initiatives.
- Consider employing a shared Partnership Faith Development Worker (see recruitment resources on secure area of [diocesan website](#)).

OBJECTIVE 3: SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION – family, parish, school

- Consider how the parish will best support families on their sacramental journey from registration in parish to celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation and beyond.
- Nurture a team approach to accompanying families, availing of regular training opportunities offered by the Archdiocese.
- Plan for and implement the [Accompanying Families: Sacraments of Initiation Policy](#), strengthening the relationship between family, parish and school, in accompanying children and their families in developing their faith.
- Introduce the [Seeds of Faith](#) programme providing for the religious education of Catholic children attending schools other than Catholic schools within the parish/partnership.

OBJECTIVE 4: EUCHARIST & LITURGY

- Encourage full, conscious and active participation in celebrating the Eucharistic in spirit-filled and hopeful ways.
- Establish a liturgy team to assist in the preparation of liturgical celebrations throughout the liturgical year, creatively incorporating themes from our four focus areas of Servant Leadership, Social Justice, Welcome and Faith-filled.
- Encourage formation and training opportunities for liturgical ministries including music ministry.
- Assess regularly in the partnership, that the availability and times of Masses best nurtures a sense of participation and belonging as a faith community.

OBJECTIVE 5: PRAYER

- Invite, train and support a variety of people to lead prayer in parish/partnership.
- Arrange opportunities and spaces for prayer experiences.
- Organise an annual day of prayer, retreat or pilgrimage for the partnership.
- Promote unity among local Christian churches by sharing in ecumenical prayer and action.
- Organise parish/partnership participation in the diocesan Novena to the Holy Spirit, encouraging PRAYER – REFLECTION – PLANNING annually at Pentecost.



Pray

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.

Reflect

As I read through the section of the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027* which relates to **Faith**, which actions do I think our parish/partnership could plan for and make our **immediate priority**? ...What could I do?

Plan

‘It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions.’

Pope Francis

Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our **immediate priority**:



D. Implementing our Objectives

STRUCTURE

Following a synodal process of dialogue, prayer and discernment at *Building Hope* gatherings in parishes across the Archdiocese, fifty-three [Parish Partnerships](#) in fifteen deaneries were confirmed in [Advent 2022](#).

The parishes, partnerships, deaneries, along with their pastoral teams, pastoral councils, finance committees and forums are the crucial structural arrangements through which pastoral action and renewal will be implemented across the Archdiocese.

PARTNERSHIP PASTORAL COUNCILS:

Each partnership will have a Partnership Pastoral Council at which to prayerfully discern, promote and agree joint pastoral actions.

As the *Building Hope* initiative has evolved, parish partnerships are already moving forward; naming their partnership, sharing liturgies, ministries & training, developing partnership websites, social media and communication strategies.

Parish partnerships may decide together to employ a Partnership Faith Development Worker, to help build up communities that are faith-filled, centred around Jesus Christ.

PARTNERSHIP FINANCE FORUMS:

It is imperative too that each partnership will have a Partnership Finance Forum to enable: financial planning and fundraising across the partnership; good governance and alignment of financial practices; support for shared pastoral initiatives; review of opportunities and challenges across partnership, for example, in employment, administration and procurement.

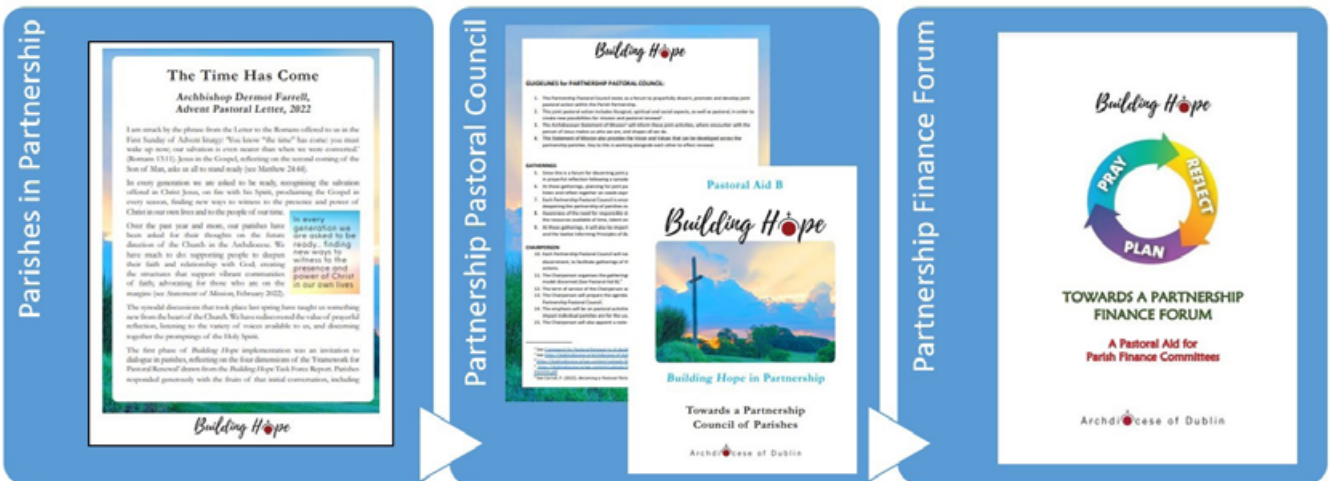
The pastoral and missionary priorities of some parish partnerships will best be served in time by the employment of a Partnership Operational/ Administrative Co-ordinator to co-ordinate and manage the non-pastoral day-to-day tasks across the partnership.

Some parishes, facing their particular pastoral reality, will repurpose or sell buildings, having reviewed locally their pastoral needs across the partnership of parishes while bearing in mind our overarching social justice priorities as a community of faith.

Parishes, as our shared mission evolves, may decide to begin a dialogue locally towards their amalgamation with neighbouring parishes in the partnership.

‘The key thing in the Church is the proclamation of the Gospel, that’s not limited to an infrastructure.’

Archbishop Dermot Farrell



RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

[Pastoral Aids](#) and [Guidelines](#) are available which support the formation of Partnership Pastoral Councils and Partnership Finance Forums, offering guidance regarding: the composition of membership; frequency of meetings; and topics for discussion at partnership level.

Supports for all local parish/partnership conversations are offered from our diocesan offices.

The central diocesan offices, councils and commissions are available for consultation, training, formation and guidance concerning local pastoral, financial, property, education, safeguarding, communications, fundraising, administrative and operational matters.

The [Mission & Ministry](#) team is available to support pastoral development in our parishes /partnership of parishes as together we build hope.

They accompany teams, offering training & formation opportunities and supporting the development of voluntary ministries in parishes across the Archdiocese.

For example:

- + **Diocesan Certificate in Catechesis:** To deepen our accompanying skills to share the richness of faith effectively with adults, children and groups.
- + **Servant Leadership Course:** Exploring and growing the skills and practice of servant leadership in parish life and ministry.
- + **Pathways:** Exploring and nourishing our faith and understanding of ministry, with others, in an environment appropriate to adult learning and faith development.

- + **Funeral Ministry and Leadership:** Equipping teams to work together to support grieving families and lead meaningful liturgies of consolation.
- + **Confirmation Connect:** Enabling leaders to offer a parish-based process to support and accompany families preparing to celebrate the Sacrament.
- + **Youth Ministry Training:** Equipping those of us called to accompany youth and young adults with the skills to lead this important ministry in parishes.
- + **Laudato Si' Awards:** Training to accompany youth and young adults to live out their calling to protect and care for God's creation through the parish.
- + **Training for Pastoral Councils:** Developing pastoral leadership, vision and prayerful decision-making for parish/partnership communities.
- + **Training for Ministers of Holy Communion:** Understanding the importance of ministry and Eucharist to enable best practice.
- + **Training for Ministers of the Word:** Embracing what it means to effectively proclaim God's word through a deeper understanding of ministry.





Co-responsible Servant Leadership

The *Building Hope* process is one founded on the principle of differentiated co-responsibility – ‘active participation of the People of God – clergy, religious and lay people’ side-by-side, in service to the varied and different gifts and talents that the Spirit sows in the People of God.

All of our structures – parish, parish partnership, deanery, councils, forums and committees will reflect a commitment to co-responsible servant leadership.

‘All the baptised, with their respective charisms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God’s presence in the world.’

Pope Francis, *Spes non Confundit*, 17

We are, each one of us, Missionary Disciples

In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptised, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelisation, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelisation to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients.

The new evangelisation calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptised. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelisation; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.

Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’.

If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: ‘We have found the Messiah!’ (Jn 1:41).

The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him ‘because of the woman’s testimony’ (Jn 4:39).

So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, ‘immediately proclaimed Jesus’ (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21).

So what are we waiting for?

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120



‘...So what are we waiting for?’

Pope Francis

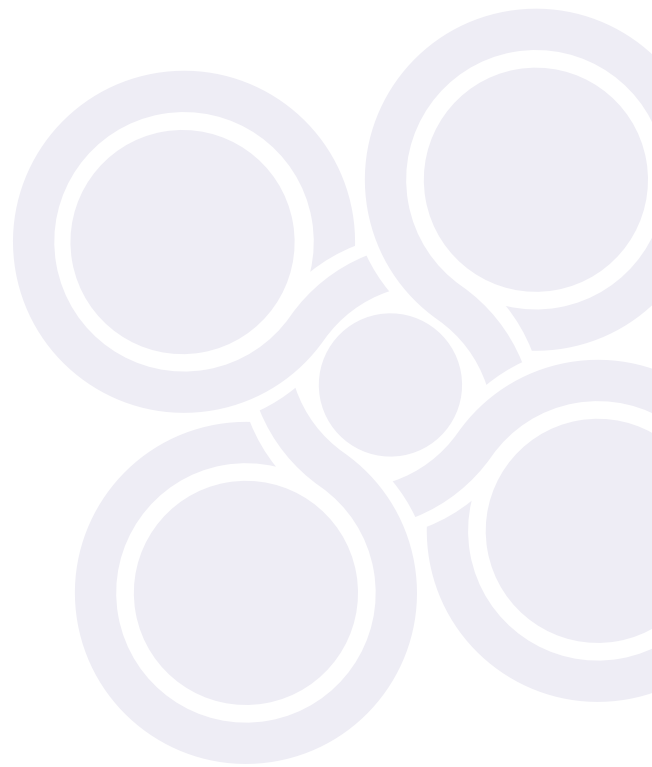
We need the personal involvement and participation of all the People of God.

We welcome and include pastoral and ministry teams and others into local parish / partnership *Building Hope* planning dialogue and discernment.

We draw on the resources and supports offered to develop voluntary ministry in parishes/partnerships across the Archdiocese.

We are continuously challenged to ‘open doors’, to ‘go forth’, ‘to initiate everyone ... into the ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals at the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5).’

Building Hope Planning
Workshops begin
Autumn 2024



E. Process – Pastoral Planning Cycle

Our pastoral planning cycle begins with *Building Hope* Planning Workshops for our pastoral teams and councils.

Within the first stage, the focus will be on discerning initial actions, under each of the four focus areas, which can be implemented locally.

Resources and supports will assist parish / partnership conversations concerning: the discrete steps involved in each action; drawing others into the dialogue; implementation & review.



F. A Journey of Formation: Pilgrims of Hope

The *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027 for the Archdiocese of Dublin is a journey of formation which we will undertake together, one family of Christ united in all our diversity in the oneness of love that is God, building hope together, united in mission.

‘Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying: That they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you have sent me.’ (Jn 17:21)

We will together, as Pilgrims of Hope, build communities centred on Jesus, intentionally addressing the four focus areas:

- **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**
- **SOCIAL JUSTICE**
- **WELCOME**
- **FAITH**

Discerning our own pastoral priorities locally, we will commit to initiatives chosen from the ‘suggested actions’ within the the *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027. We will draw for support, resources and training on each other and on our diocesan offices.

We will be encouragers of each other, moving beyond anxiety and resistances, as we open our hearts to renewal and new beginnings... walking together as one family of faith.

‘Go mbronna an Tiarna,
atá éirithe ó mhairbh agus
imithe suas ar neamh,
an grásta orainne
dóchas a athaimsiú,
dóchas a fhógairt agus
dóchas a thógáil.’

‘May the Lord, risen from the
dead and ascended into
heaven, grant us the grace
to rediscover hope,
to proclaim hope and
to build hope.’

Pope Francis, May 2024



Appendix



Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our immediate priority:



SUGGESTED TEMPLATE PLANNING FORM*

Date of Review _____

FOCUS AREA CO-RESPONSIBLE SERVANT LEADERSHIP	OBJECTIVE (see page 12)	AGREED ACTION(S) (see page 13)	Resources needed to complete action [if any]	Steps towards completion of action [a, b, c...]	Name of person who will lead each step	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION e.g. Short term – 2025 Medium term – 2026 Long term – 2027	Review/comments

*The above form may be photocopied or further copies printed / edited / accessed under the *Building Hope* tab on the diocesan website [here](#)



Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our **immediate priority**:



SUGGESTED TEMPLATE PLANNING FORM*

Date of Review _____

FOCUS AREA SOCIAL JUSTICE	OBJECTIVE (see page 15)	AGREED ACTION(S) (see page 16)	Resources needed to complete action [if any]	Steps towards completion of action [a, b, c...]	Name of person who will lead each step	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION e.g. Short term – 2025 Medium term – 2026 Long term – 2027	Review/comments

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Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our immediate priority:



SUGGESTED TEMPLATE PLANNING FORM*

Date of Review _____

FOCUS AREA WELCOME	OBJECTIVE (see page 18)	AGREED ACTION(S) (see page 19)	Resources needed to complete action [if any]	Steps towards completion of action [a, b, c...]	Name of person who will lead each step	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION e.g. Short term – 2025 Medium term – 2026 Long term – 2027	Review/comments

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Having gathered in our parish/partnership group, we discerned that we would plan for and make the following actions our **immediate priority**:



SUGGESTED TEMPLATE PLANNING FORM*

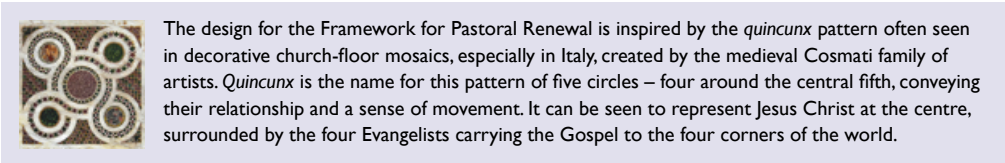
Date of Review _____

FOCUS AREA FAITH-FILLED	OBJECTIVE (see page 21)	AGREED ACTION(S) (see page 22)	Resources needed to complete action [if any]	Steps towards completion of action [a, b, c...]	Name of person who will lead each step	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION e.g. Short term – 2025 Medium term – 2026 Long term – 2027	Review/comments

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Notes



Archdiocese of Dublin



Building Hope



The *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group

Most Rev Dermot Farrell, Very Rev Gareth Byrne (*Chairperson*), Very Rev Declan Blake, Ms Patricia Carroll, Mr Tom Foley, Ms Kirsten Mahon, Rev Dermot McCarthy, Dr Cora O'Farrell, Ms Orla O'Grady Walshe (*Project Co-ordinator*), Ms Geraldine Tallon, Rt Rev Mgr Eoin Thynne