

Archdiocese of Dublin

***DUBLIN DIOCESAN
PASTORAL COUNCIL
2024***

***Reflecting the entire People of God,
with the good of the whole Diocese in mind***



Foreword

After consultation and discussion, as detailed in Section One of this document, in 2023 I announced at the Council of Priests that I intended to establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council in the Archdiocese. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, emphasised that ‘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’ (120).

The faithful, in fact, have an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church. The mission of the Church, the work of God, is not just the responsibility of the teaching Church, it is the call and the responsibility of all the baptised.

In this light, participation of the lay faithful becomes essential. They constitute the majority of the People of God. We need to promote co-responsibility and overcome the mind-set which runs the risk of keeping them on the edges of Church life. This situation can be overcome by the establishment of a properly functioning Diocesan Pastoral Council which is a participatory body: ‘the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body... And God has so arranged the body... that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another,’ as St Paul so powerfully put it to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:12, 24–25). Such a body allows the People of God to play a part in the pastoral development of the Diocese.

Synodality is now a ‘constitutive dimension’ of the Church, that is, an essential element of the Church (*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*, 28). A Pastoral

Council recognises at the diocesan level that the Holy Spirit is active in the People of God, and will enable the Church to be more participatory and missionary.

As the final document of the recent Synod makes clear, 'those in authority are, in several instances, obligated by current law to conduct a consultation before taking a decision. Those with pastoral authority are obliged to listen to those who participate in the consultation and may not act as if the consultation had not taken place. Therefore, those in authority will not depart from the fruits of consultation that produce an agreement without a compelling reason which must be appropriately explained...' (91).

The following paragraph speaks of the authority of the bishop to make decisions, which are grounded in the magisterium. Nonetheless: 'Such an exercise of authority... is not without limits; it may not ignore a direction which emerges through proper discernment within a consultative process, especially if this is done by participatory bodies.' (92).

One of the ways to ensure that the faithful are able to be heard and can participate in the life of the church, is through a Diocesan Pastoral Council which is provided for in Canon Law.

We need to listen to the Word of God in order to know 'what the Spirit is saying to the Church' (Rev. 2:29). A synodal Church is a Church that listens to the faithful People of God, the Priest, the Bishop, the Holy Father; all listening to each other; and all listening to the Holy Spirit.

I look forward to participating in the discernment process outlined in this document, and pray God's blessing on the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council which will be convened soon afterwards to assist in deepening the pastoral life of the Archdiocese, in the joy of the Spirit.



+Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin

Feast of All the Saints of Ireland, 6th November 2024

Section One: Developing a Diocesan Pastoral Council for the Archdiocese of Dublin

In the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Pope St John Paul II spoke about renewing the Church for the new millennium, saying: ‘The programme for guiding the Church already exists: It is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever.’ (Pope St John Paul II, 2001, 29). Developing this idea further in what amounts to pastoral planning for the 21st Century, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis focuses on the mission of the Church as the basis of renewal:

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, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open... As Pope St John Paul II once said to the Bishops of Oceania: All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion. (Pope Francis, 2013, 27)



Building Hope

In April 2021, a Task Force was established by Archbishop Dermot Farrell at the beginning of his ministry in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Its terms of reference were: “Taking account of the needs of the people of Dublin as we emerge from the COVID crisis, to develop a pastoral strategy that supports parish communities of faith to undertake a radical renewal, looking to the future with creativity that enables the Archdiocese of Dublin to act now so as to give effective witness and service in the years ahead.” (Archbishop Dermot Farrell, 2021).

In the spirit of synodal listening, being promoted already by Pope Francis, the *Building Hope* Task Force reached out to as many groups and constituencies across the Diocese as was possible. The recommendations of the Task Force are to be found in its October 2021 Report, including, crucially, the publication of the *Building Hope* Principles to inform pastoral strategy (p. 10) and the *Building Hope* Framework for Pastoral Renewal (p. 15).

In order to implement the strategy suggested by the Task Force Report, Archbishop Farrell put in place the *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) which has led a discussion of pastoral renewal at parish and diocesan level in the Archdiocese over the three

years, Dec 2021–Dec 2024. Full details of processes undertaken and documentation developed can be found at the diocesan website under the *Building Hope* tab. Through a cycle of ongoing prayer, reflection, action and further reflection, this work has seen the publication of a diocesan Statement of Mission (Feb 2022), the promulgation of Partnerships of Parishes by Archbishop Farrell (Dec 2022) and the publication of the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027* (Sept 2024). Workshops took place across the Archdiocese to launch this three-year flexible planning resource (Sept/Oct 2024). This pastoral planning resource and process is central to pastoral renewal in the Archdiocese, 2025 to 2027.



Synodality

The Second Vatican Council restored the synodal practice of the early Church:

*Through it, the Holy People of God have discovered that a synodal way of being silent, praying, listening and speaking, rooted in the Word of God and in joyful, if also sometimes painful encounters, leads to a deeper awareness that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. An invaluable fruit of this process is the heightened awareness of our identity as the faithful People of God, within which each is the bearer of a dignity derived from Baptism, and each is called to differentiated co-responsibility for the common mission of evangelisation. (Vatican II, *Christus Dominus*, 1965, 27)*

With the universal Synod on Synodality 2021-2024, Pope Francis has once again encouraged the Church to renew this fundamental characteristic of Church life. The Irish Church too has initiated a Synodal Pathway process towards a Synod of the Church in Ireland, participating fully in the movement to re-establish the synodal nature of the Church. Preparation for and ongoing dialogue around the two-part Synod on Synodality began with the widest possible gathering of people's experience from parishes and congregation in every part of the world. Through a series of conversations at various levels this was brought to the Synodal gatherings in Rome (Oct 2023 and Oct 2024).

Around the same time as Archbishop Farrell's *Building Hope* initiative, therefore, a parallel listening exercise, taking place through the Synodal Pathway Conversations, contributed to ensuring that the Archdiocese has been *Building Hope* in a synodal manner. These two processes have gathered a wealth of information, opinion and experience of the Church in Dublin at this time.

One area of strong convergence which emerged from both exercises, was the need to establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Establishing a Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council

With this clarity achieved, Archbishop Farrell launched a working group to establish a Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council (DDPC). The work and efforts of the Council of Priests, Parishes and Deaneries some years ago in seeking to establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council have been acknowledged.

Building on their work and experience and following the methods at work in the universal Synod on Synodality, this document offers parameters for the DDPC.

The Role of the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council

The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus* states:

*It is **highly desirable** that in every diocese a special pastoral council be established, over which the diocesan bishop himself presides and in which clergy, religious and laity specially chosen for the purpose will have a part. It will belong **to this council to investigate, to consider and to formulate practical conclusions** about those things which pertain to pastoral works. (*Christus Dominus*, 30)*

The role of the DDPC, therefore, will be consultative, to assist the diocesan Bishop in his decisions and considerations about pastoral planning in the Diocese:

*The bishop should greatly esteem the council's propositions and seriously consider the judgments on which the Diocesan Pastoral Council members agree, preserving the freedom and authority which are his by divine law for his pastoral service to that portion of the People of God committed to his care. (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *Omnes Christifideles*, 1973, 8)*

The DDPC will be a significant embodiment of the processes and practices of pastoral renewal established in the Archdiocese under Archbishop Farrell since 2021, giving ever fuller expression to *Building Hope* in a synodal manner. Working with the diocesan Statement of Mission, the *Building Hope* Informing Principles and the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027*, the DDPC will give particular expression through consultation, active participation, inclusiveness, the role of women, engagement with young people, and shaping change. In its task it will encourage outreach to people on the margins and care for the earth, supporting, too, the best use of diocesan education and training facilities and possibilities. (See the *Building Hope* Informing Principles).

In assisting Parishes and Partnerships of Parishes to engage fully with the *Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027*, which coincides with its term of office, it will be important that the DDPC reflects the interconnected four dimensions of the 'Framework for Pastoral Renewal'. These four dimensions are built around the person of Jesus Christ and the mission that has been handed on to us as together we build communities of co-responsibility through servant leadership, communities that are active in social justice, communities of welcome and inclusion, communities that are faith filled. (*Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027*, p. 11)



Membership of the DDPC

In establishing the membership of the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council (DDPC) the Code of Canon Law gives this guidance:

The Christian Faithful who are designated to a pastoral council are to be selected in such a way that they truly reflect the entire portion of the People of God which constitutes the diocese, with consideration given to the different areas of the diocese, social conditions and professions [occupations], and the role which they have in the apostolate whether individually or joined with others (Code of Canon Law, 512.2)

The People of God are encouraged to consider themselves not simply as members of a Parish but also the Diocese and of the Universal Church. It must be borne in mind that all categories of persons might not be reflected on each Diocesan Pastoral Council, but over time they should be.

The majority of the members of the Pastoral Council should be lay since the greatest part of the diocesan community is composed of laity. (Omnes Christifideles, 7)

Using the synodal model, the beginning of the process of nomination of members for the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council will be through the Deaneries, in the Parishes of the Diocese. The process will then move through a discernment process in the five Areas of the Archdiocese. At the final level the Archbishop, with the final discernment group, will prayerfully consider those who have been named and choose members for the DDPC.

At each level the discernment takes place with members of the People of God and priest leaders in the Diocese, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The rest of this document provides further information and a method by which we can creatively listen to the voice to the Holy Spirit active in our time through the voices and experiences of all the Baptised.

The members of the DDPC will be called on to put their individual skills, talents and pastoral experience in parishes and in the Archdiocese at the service of all in our local Parishes and Partnerships of Parishes for the further renewal and building up of the Archdiocese, and for the good of all. In the words of Pope Francis:

'Mission is experienced in fellowship with our communities and with the whole Church... This love then becomes service within the community.' (Pope Francis, *Dilexit Nos*, 2024, 212-213)

Framework for Pastoral Renewal

Building Hope



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

Section Two: Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council Statutes

I. Title:

The Council shall be called the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council (DDPC)

II. Definition:

The DDPC, consists of members of the Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church, clergy, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially laity, who are designated in a manner determined by the Archbishop. (Canon 512.1)

The members of Christ's faithful who are designated to the pastoral council (DDPC) are to be selected in such a way that the council (DDPC) truly reflects the entire portion of the People of God which constitutes the diocese, of social conditions and professions [or occupations] and of the part played in the apostolate by the members, whether individually or in association with others.

(Canon 512.2)

III. Function:

The DDPC is a consultative group whose function is to work co-responsibly with the Archbishop in designing ways and means by which the Diocese can best fulfil the mission of Jesus Christ.

IV. Offices:

President

The Archbishop shall be the President of the DDPC.

The President of the DDPC convokes the meetings.

- The Archbishop shall attend all meetings. A meeting where the Archbishop is not present is not deemed a meeting of the DDPC.

The Archbishop may call members together without being present for consultation on a particular pastoral matter.

The role of the President includes the following:

- Preparing the agenda for meetings with the Secretary, the Chairperson and other members of the DDPC as agreed.
- Encouraging the DDPC to have the good of the whole Diocese in their discussions.
- Ensuring that there is ongoing formation for the group.

Chairperson

The Chairperson is elected by the members of the DDPC for a fixed period of three years.

- Ex-officio members may not hold this position but will have a vote.

The role of the Chairperson includes:

- Preparing the agenda for meetings with the Secretary, the President and other members of the DDPC as agreed.
- Chairing the meetings.
- Encouraging all members to be involved in the meetings of the DDPC and in its activities.
- Liaising with the diocesan offices and other structures of advice and governance in the Diocese.

Secretary

The Secretary is a member of the council elected by the group for a fixed period of three years. Ex-Officio members may not hold this position but will have a vote.

The role of the Secretary includes:

- Preparing the agenda for meetings with the Chairperson, the President and other members of the DDPC as agreed and issuing it to the members of the DDPC ten days before the next meeting.
- Taking minutes of meetings and issuing them to the members within ten days of the meeting.
- Attending to correspondence.

V. Term:

The term of the DDPC shall be three years.

Lay members of the DDPC, male & female religious, permanent deacons and personal nominees, shall not serve more than two consecutive terms, but shall be eligible for membership subsequently.

After three years, half of these members of the DDPC will step down.

Members failing to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation shall be deemed to have resigned.

VI. Membership

The maximum number on the DDPC is 21, made up as follows:

- Nine lay people (a process of discernment will take place)
- Two lay people who are personal nominees of the Archbishop
- A female religious
- A male religious or permanent deacon
- Director of the Office of Mission and Ministry (ex-officio)
- Area Episcopal Vicars (ex-officio)
- Vicars General (ex-officio)
- Auxiliary Bishops (ex-officio)

The guiding principal for membership is that “it should **reflect** the entire portion of the People of God who have the **good** of the whole Diocese in mind”.

The grounding values and gifts of each person on the DDPC is that they must be:

- Prayerful
- Participative
- Pastoral
- Practical strategic planner
- Partnership driven

The next level of reflecting the entire portion of the People of God is that the members must be drawn from people to give a mix of:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Ministry/Service
- Urban/Rural/Socio economic areas

VII. Working Groups

The DDPC is primarily concerned with promoting action through pastoral planning. While it is not immediately responsible for the implementation of projects the DDPC ensures that projects are carried out. In this way the DDPC enables the People of God to recognise their gifts for ministry and to use them for the good of the Diocese and its mission.

As part of its considerations of pastoral matters the DDPC may set up working groups. They will be made up of members of the DDPC and others, when appropriate, who will be invited by the President and Chairperson to provide advice and expertise on particular matters.

VIII. Meetings:

These will take place four times a year in advance of the Vicar Foranes Meetings.

The months for the meetings are:

- September
- November
- February
- April

The venue for the meetings will move around the Diocese.

IX. Quorum:

A quorum for a meeting must consist of five lay members of the DDPC and three clergy.

X. Extraordinary meeting:

The Archbishop as President of the Council may convene and chair an extraordinary meeting should he consider it necessary.

XI. Amendments:

The Statutes may be amended by the DDPC with the approval of the Archbishop.

XII. Finance

A budget will be agreed with the Finance Secretariat for the costs of meetings and materials for the DDPC. This will be organised and managed by the Financial Administrator.

Approval

The Statutes are to be approved by the Archbishop before being adopted and are to be reviewed every three years.

Date

Section Three: Levels of Discernment

Levels of Discernment

**1st
Level**

December Deanery Meeting

A presentation explaining the discernment method will be given. Those gathered will be asked to think of people who meet the criteria for membership of the DDPC. They will be asked to prayerfully reflect, and to ask those who come to mind if their name can be put forward at the special Deanery gathering.

**2nd
Level**

Special Deanery Gathering

The members of the Deanery are asked to come to a special Deanery gathering to prayerfully discern the name(s) of suitable member(s) of the DDPC. This will be a time of prayer, lasting about an hour, during which members of the Deanery will be asked to place the consideration forms in the box. This will take place within a week of the Deanery Meeting

**3rd
Level**

Deanery Committee Discernment

Within a week of the special Deanery gathering, the VF and the Deanery Committee will meet and open the box and go through the names. Following the discernment process they will choose three names from the Deanery Gathering to go forward from those placed in the box, to the next level of discernment. The candidates will be invited by the VF to complete the personal reflection form.

These three steps are to be completed before Christmas.

**4th
Level**

Pastoral Area Discernment

In mid-January the Auxiliary Bishops/Area Episcopal Vicars will meet with the VFs and a member of the Deanery Committees of their area. Following the discernment process, they will choose five names from the nine sent forward from the Deanery discernment to go forward to the next level of discernment.

**Final
Level**

Diocesan Discernment

In early February the Archbishop will call the Moderator of the Curia, the Auxiliary Bishops/Area Episcopal Vicars and five lay people to the final discernment meeting. Following the discernment process, they will choose nine people from the twenty five sent forward from the Pastoral Area discernment for membership of the DDPC. Following an orientation workshop the DDPC will be commissioned at a Diocesan celebration.

QUALITIES IN A MEMBER OF THE DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

Prayerful

Prayer is central to the life and growth of the community. DDPC members recognise the importance of both private and personal prayer. Prayer underpins and strengthens partnership and planning, it will be impossible to work if the Spirit isn't in the work. What is brought into action by the DDPC needs to be a response to God's call to become the People of God, a people called to build the Kingdom, not our own kingdoms

Participative

The mandate of Christ to continue His mission on earth necessitates that we work together as one body. This means that the DDPC members are not lone rangers but are able to work effectively with each other and with other individuals and groups within the Diocese. We read in 1 Cor. 12:4-6 'There are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit, there are all sorts of services to be done, but always to the same Lord, working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God working in all of them.' Everything that the DDPC does should be directed by the principle of 'full, conscious and active participation' to help everyone recognise their giftedness and to be fully active in the service of the Diocese.

Pastoral

All Christians are gifted by the Holy Spirit and are called to use their gifts in the service of God in the Church and in the world. DDPC members are people who recognise that the gifts needed for the Diocese are to be found within the Diocese. They constantly seek to discern the giftedness of people. The DDPC members are called to be a caring, listening presence, available to the people of the Diocese. As individual members they don't promote the ideas of just one group, they take the whole picture on board when making pastoral recommendations. The DDPC is primarily focused on everything that relates to the faith life of the Diocese.

Practical Strategic Planner

As disciples of Christ committed to sharing the Good News of God's love and life, DDPC members recognise the need to listen, learn and adapt. Planning is about growing others in ministries and helping the Diocese to embrace pastoral changes that help everyone to grow. This planning enables the Diocese to truly activate the gifts of the Spirit received at Baptism and strengthened at Confirmation. The pastoral goals of the DDPC will be connected to the Dublin Diocese Statement of Mission and the *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025 - 2027

Partnership Driven

DDPC members have a missionary zeal which continually reaches out to others, inviting them to the fullness of the life that God offers and to share in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Baptism is what grounds us in our ministries whether lay or ordained, young or old, experienced or less experienced. All the baptised are called to place their gifts at the service of humankind.

Appendix One Deanery Consideration Form

Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council Membership Consideration Form

Discernment Prayer

Lord,

Let me know clearly

the work which you are calling me to do in life.

And grant me every grace I need

to answer your call with courage

and love and lasting dedication to your will.

Amen.

After prayerful consideration I wish to put forward:

Candidate details:

Name:

Parish:

Contact number:

Please circle the appropriate statement in each box

Prayerful

This person takes decisions to prayer for confirmation.

YES

This person can be reflective and takes time to consider

all aspects of a situation.

YES

Participative

This person can easily work with others and listens openly to opinions.

YES

This person takes part in discussions and is willing to reach consensus.

YES

Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council Membership Consideration Form

Please circle the appropriate statement in each box

Pastoral

This person has a great concern for the good of their

Parish/Deanery/Diocese.

YES

This person is willing to serve others in their

Parish/Deanery/Diocese.

YES

Practical Strategic Planner

This person looks at the bigger picture and doesn't get lost in personal opinions or parish customs.

YES

This person can bring about change in a positive and planned way.

YES

Partnership Driven

This person works well with others in partnership and values teamwork.

YES

This person recognises and appreciates the skills and talents of others as partners in mission.

YES

Any other gifts or special skills they bring to this role:

Appendix Two *Covering Letter to Candidate*

Dear _____,

The Archbishop has asked for the names of candidates to form the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council (DDPC). The vision of the DDPC is for better pastoral coordination and consultation in the Diocese in a synodal manner. To achieve this the Archbishop is establishing a Diocesan Pastoral Council in which clergy, religious and lay people would have a part.

The DDPC reflects the entire People of God in the Dublin Diocese and together they have the good of the whole Diocese in mind. Therefore, those who are asked to be candidates for the DDPC are not nominees or representatives of a particular area of the Diocese or a particular group within the Diocese.

The discernment criteria for all members of the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council is that they are **prayerful, participative, pastoral, practical in planning and partnership driven**. They must be engaged in the life of the Church through their service or ministry in their Parish or in another aspect of Church life. Your name has been put forward as one who fulfils some or all of the first set of criteria.

You are invited to read carefully the information on the Personal Reflection Form. If you feel that you are being drawn to this role, then please complete the form and return it to me.

Following the synodal methodology, choosing the membership of the DDPC will be a discernment process at parish, deanery and pastoral area levels. The goal of each level of discernment is to be able to offer the Archbishop nine people who reflect the entire People of God in the Diocese. If you are invited to be a member of the DDPC, you are not representing your Parish or Deanery, you are there to investigate, consider and give practical advice on pastoral matters keeping the overall good of the Diocese in mind.

Thank you for response as together we prayerfully discern and enter into this process of selection for the Diocese.

Fr. X, Vicar Forane for _____ Deanery

Appendix Three Personal Reflection Form

DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PERSONAL REFLECTION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP



Diocesan Pastoral Council

You have been put forward to be considered in the discernment process to be a member of the Dublin Diocesan Pastoral Council. The DDPC reflects the entire People of God in the Dublin Diocese. They have the good of the whole Diocese in mind so they are not representing an area of the Diocese or a group within the Diocese, but advise the Archbishop on pastoral matters.

Those whose names have been put forward, like you, are people who have the qualities of being prayerful, participative, pastoral, practical in strategic planning and partnership driven. Over the next few weeks a process of discernment will begin to choose nine lay people from across the Diocese to be a member of the DDPC.

In reflecting the entire people of God, the membership will have a gender balance, a mix of ethnicity and be intergenerational. All will have various experiences of ministry or service in the parish or in a church activity. The membership will be made up of people from rural/urban and different socio-economic areas.

While each DDPC may not cover all of these criteria, over time it will.



What is the being asked of me?

- If you are called to be a member of the DDPC, following the process of discernment you will be asked to make a commitment of three years.
- There will be four meetings in September, November, February and April.
- These will take place in different parts of the Diocese.
- You may be asked to become part of a working group with others on a particular matter.
- You will be asked to pray about the work of the DDPC and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your participation and recommendations to the Archbishop.

If you are unable to make this commitment at this time, we understand and maybe you will consider an invitation at another time.

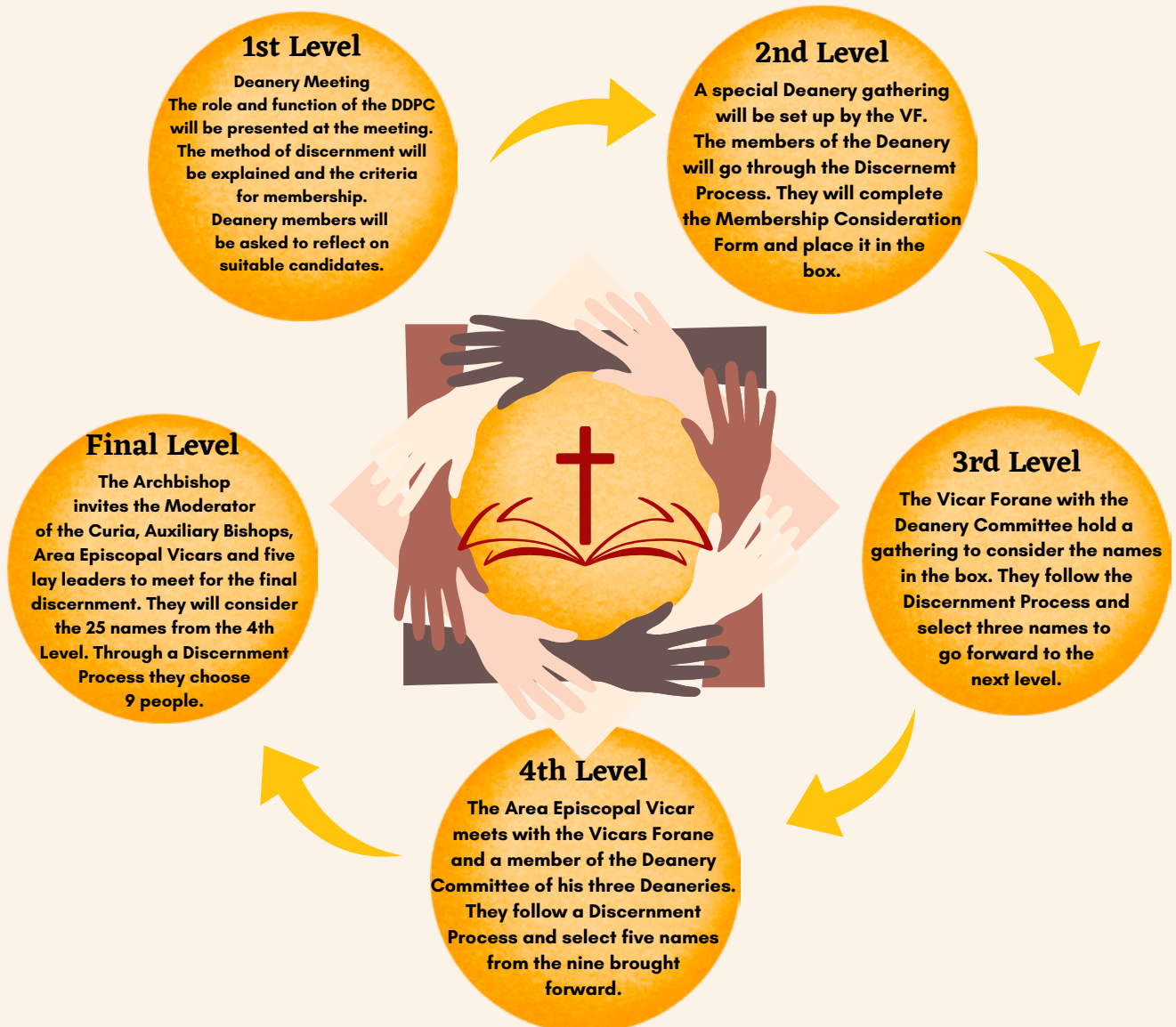
If you are willing to let your name go forward but are not called to be a member of the DDPC, it is not a reflection on you. Rather it is staying true to the criteria for membership. We hope that in the future you would let your name go forward.



DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PERSONAL REFLECTION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP



How does the discernment process work?



How do you know if you are still being considered?

After each level of discernment, people will be informed by email if they are being considered for the next stage or if they are being thanked for their willingness to go through the process.

Once the Final Level has been completed, the Archbishop will call people to membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Those who have not been invited to become members of the DDPC may be asked to participate in working groups or in the Pastoral Area Committees.

DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PERSONAL REFLECTION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP



Personal Information & Profile

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Please note that the following fields are optional

Age group (please circle)

18 - 25

26 - 40

41 - 55

56 - 70

70 +

Country of Birth:

Ethnicity:

Gender:

Occupation:

If you are willing to let your name go forward to the discernment process, then we need you to fill in this personal profile based on the criteria for membership of the DDPC.

Take a moment to pray, placing yourself in the presence of God who loves you. Open your heart for guidance as you complete this form and trust in the plans that God has for you.

Prayer: Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.

Being a Prayerful Person

How does prayer guide you in the decisions and direction of your life?

DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PERSONAL REFLECTION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP



Being a Participative Member of a Group

In being part of the DDPC you will have to participate in the discussions and consider the situations that the Archbishop refers to you. In what ways have you participated in a decision making group.

Having a Pastoral Understanding

In what ways do you serve others in your pastoral situation eg: in your Parish, in your Deanery or in another Church activity?

Being a Practical Strategic Planner

The role of the DDPC is to look at the good of the whole Diocese and respond to the challenges we face today. What input have you given to a situation in your parish/work/other activity that took account of the bigger picture?

DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PERSONAL REFLECTION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP



Partnership Driven

Working with others means listening, understanding, challenging and arriving at consensus.

What are good examples in your life to show how you work with others?

GDPR

I give consent that you can use the personal data that I have given you to be shared at each level of the discernment process. This consent can be withdrawn at any time unless the Archdiocese has a legitimate or other legal obligation to retain it.

I understand that the personal data will only be shared with those who need to use it for the purpose it was collected. The personal data will be kept safely and securely and will be protected against unauthorised access, alteration and loss.

Please note that the personal data you have provided will be retained in Archbishop’s House for a period of three years, the term of the DDPC, should you reach the final level of discernment. This will enable the Archbishop consider you for appointment to the DDPC or to fill a vacancy that may arise or be asked to be part of a working group or to be a member of a Pastoral Area Committee.

The personal data of those who do not go on to the final level of discernment will be deleted/confidentially shredded after one year. All personal data is managed in line with the Dublin Diocesan Privacy Statement which is available at www.dublindiocese.ie.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Thank You!

DUBLIN DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL PERSONAL REFLECTION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP



A moment of prayer...

**Almighty God,
author of my life,
help me learn to read what you have written on my heart.
Give me discerning eyes
and an untiring spirit
to look within me
in order to understand how to reach outside of me.
And once I have begun to read you aright,
give me the generosity to help others to read you,
to sound you out one letter,
one word of radical giving at a time.
- Author Unknown**

**Please send this form to your Vicar Forane no later than the
15th January 2025**

Name of Vicar Forane: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Appendix Four Levels of Discernment **Level One**

Level One Discernment Special Deanery Gathering

**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.**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles Acts 1: 15-23

It was during those days that Peter stood up in the midst of the community and said "Brothers, it was necessary that the scripture referring to Judas be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit had spoken through David about the one who would lead the crowd coming to arrest Jesus. He was one of our number and had been called to share our ministry."

In the Book of Psalms it is written: 'Let his house become deserted and may no one live in it'. And again 'May another take his office'. Therefore we must choose someone from among those who were with us during all that time that the Lord Jesus moved about with us, beginning with John's baptism until the day that Jesus was taken away from us. One of these has to become with us, a witness to his resurrection.

So they proposed two men, Joseph called Barsabbas, also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed "You know, Lord, the hearts of all. Show us, therefore, which of the two you have chosen."

We pray together

We listen

Take a time of silence for about 10mins

After this the Vicar Forane asks people to complete the Membership Consideration Forms

He then invites people to come forward and place the forms in the box. You could have another piece of music playing while this is taking place.

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.

We consider

We pray together



We pause



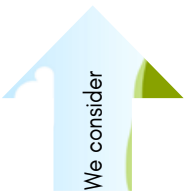
We consider

Prayerful

Prayer is central to the life and growth of the community. DDPC members recognise the importance of both private and personal prayer. Prayer underpins and strengthens partnership and planning, it will be impossible to work if the Spirit isn't in the work. What is brought into action by the DDPC needs to be a response to God's call to become the People of God, a people called to build the Kingdom, not our own kingdoms.

Participative

The mandate of Christ to continue His mission on earth necessitates that we work together as one body. This means that the DDPC members are not lone rangers but are able to work effectively with each other and with other individuals and groups within the Diocese. We read in 1 Cor. 12:4-6 'There are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit, there are all sorts of services to be done, but always to the same Lord, working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God working in all of them.' Everything that the DDPC does should be directed by the principle of 'full, conscious and active participation' to help everyone recognise their giftedness and to be fully active in the service of the Diocese.



We consider

Pastoral

All Christians are gifted by the Holy Spirit and are called to use their gifts in the service of God in the Church and in the world. DDPC members are people who recognise that the gifts needed for the Diocese are to be found within the Diocese. They constantly seek to discern the giftedness of people. The DDPC members are called to be a caring, listening presence, available to the people of the Diocese. As individual members they don't promote the ideas of just one group, they take the whole picture on board when making pastoral recommendations. The DDPC is primarily focused on everything that relates to the faith life of the Diocese.

Practical strategic planner

As disciples of Christ committed to sharing the Good News of God's love and life, DDPC members recognise the need to listen, learn and adapt. Planning is about growing others in ministries and helping the Diocese to embrace pastoral changes that help everyone to grow. This planning enables the Diocese to truly activate the gifts of the Spirit received at Baptism and strengthened at Confirmation. The pastoral goals of the DDPC will be connected to the Dublin Diocese Statement of Mission.

Partnership driven

DDPC members have a missionary zeal which continually reaches out to others, inviting them to the fullness of the life that God offers and to share in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Baptism is what grounds us in our ministries whether lay or ordained, young or old, experienced or less experienced. All the baptised are called to place their gifts at the service of humankind.

Appendix Four Levels of Discernment Level Two

Level Two Discernment Deanery Committee

We pray

**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.

All those being considered at each stage of the discernment will be contacted by email to let them know if they are moving to the next level of discernment. Those who are not going forward will be thanked for their willingness to participate in the discernment process. Being set aside from moving to the next stage of discernment is about staying true the membership criteria and that this time they are not being called forward.

In choosing the three names, also hold two in reserve in case someone decides not to go forward to the next level of discernment. The Vicar Forane will contact the five people and give them the DDPC Personal Reflection for Membership form. This form must be completed by the person who has been chosen. It is to be returned to the Vicar Forane

We pray together

**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 a
nd the Son, forever and ever.
Amen.**

There are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

1 Cor. 12:4-7

We listen

We pause



We pray

God of silence and God of all sound,
 help me to listen.
 Help me to do the deep listening to the sounds of my soul,
 waiting to hear your soft voice calling me deeper into you.
 Give me attentive ears
 that begin to separate the noise from the sounds that are you;
 you who have been speaking to me
 and through me my whole life,
 for so long that you can seem like background noise.
 Today help me hear you anew.
 - Author Unknown

We consider

The membership is about reflecting the whole People
 of God throughout the Diocese.
 The gifts that each person on the DDPC possesses is
 that they are:

Prayerful
Participative
Pastoral
Practical strategic planner
Partnership driven

The next level of reflecting the entire
 People of God is that the member must be drawn from
 people to provide a mix of:

Gender
Ethnicity
Age
Service/Ministry
Urban/Rural/Socio economic areas

We share

Having read through the candidates submissions what is converging
 and what is diverging for you?
 Take time to share this with the group.

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you and
 why?

Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their
 names forward and set the others aside.

Silent prayer

Then out of the candidates remaining who is(are) the one(s) that
 stand out for you.

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you.
 Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their
 names forward and set the rest aside.

We repeat

Repeat the process until the group arrives at the number of
 candidates this level of discernment is being asked to put forward.

We agree

When the candidates are selected the leader of the meeting will
 check that all are satisfied with those they have chosen.

Appendix Four Levels of Discernment **Level Three**

Level Three Discernment Pastoral Area

We consider

Then out of the candidates remaining who is(are) the one(s) that stand out for you.

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you. Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their names forward and set the rest aside.

Repeat the process until the group arrives at the number of candidates this level of discernment is being asked to put forward.

When the candidates are selected the leader of the meeting will check that all are satisfied with those they have chosen.

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.

We pray together

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

and the Son, forever and ever.

Amen.

We listen

Elijah went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then the word of the Lord came to him saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I am filled with jealous zeal for the Lord, because the sons of Israel have deserted you, broken down your altars and put your prophets to the sword. I am the only one left, and they want to kill me.' Then he was told, 'Go and stand on the mountain before the Lord'. The Lord himself then went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountain and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went and stood at the entrance to the cave.

1 Kings 19:9-13

We pause



Take a moment of silence

Be silent.

Be still.

Alone.

Empty

Before your God.

Say nothing.

Ask nothing.

Be silent.

Be still.

Let your God look upon you.

That is all.

God knows.

God understands.

God loves you

With an enormous love,

And only wants

To look upon you

With that love.

Quiet.

Still.

Be.

Let your God—

Love you.

We consider

Keep in mind that perhaps a person may not have all the gifts. The full group prayerfully discerns that those named should reflect the whole People of God.

The membership is about reflecting the whole People of God throughout the Diocese.

The gifts that each person on the DDPC possesses is that they are:

- **Prayerful**
- **Participative**
- **Pastoral**
- **Practical strategic planner**
- **Partnership driven**

The next level of reflecting the entire People of God is that the member must be drawn from people to provide a mix of:

- **Gender**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Age**
- **Service/Ministry**
- **Urban/Rural/Socio economic areas.**

Read through each of the candidates submissions. Who is standing out as a suitable candidate and why?

We share

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you and why?

Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their names forward and set the others aside.

Silent prayer

Appendix Four Levels of Discernment Level Four

Level Four Discernment Diocesan Discernment

**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.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening,' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

Luke 24:28-52



We pray together

We listen

We pause

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

Then out of the candidates remaining who is(are) the one(s) that stand out for you.

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you. Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their names forward and set the rest aside.

Repeat the process until the group arrives at the number of candidates this level of discernment is being asked to put forward.

When the candidates are selected the leader of the meeting will check that all are satisfied with those they have chosen.

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.

We share

We pray together



We share

Having read through the candidates submissions what is converging and what is diverging for you?
Take time to share this with the group.

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you and why?


Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their names forward and set the others aside.

Silent prayer

Then out of the candidates remaining who is(are) the one(s) that stand out for you.

Share with the group the candidate(s) that stand out for you.

Where there is convergence on a number of candidates bring their names forward and set the rest aside.



We repeat

Repeat the process until the group arrives at the number of candidates this level of discernment is being asked to put forward.



We reflect

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.



We pray

Almighty God,
author of my life,
help me learn to read what you have written on my heart.

Give me discerning eyes
and an untiring spirit
to look within me

in order to understand how to reach outside of me.

And once I have begun to read you aright,

give me the generosity to help others to read you,
to sound you out one letter,

one word of radical giving at a time.

- Author Unknown

The membership is about reflecting the whole People of God throughout the Diocese.

The gifts that each person on the DDPC possesses is that they are:

Prayerful
Participative
Pastoral
Practical strategic planner
Partnership driven

The next level of reflecting the entire People of God is that the member must be drawn from people to provide a mix of:

Gender
Ethnicity
Age
Service/Ministry
Urban/Rural/Socio economic areas



We consider



**“Baptism permits Christ to live in us,
and to live united with him,
in order to collaborate in the Church,
each according to his or her own condition,
for the transformation of the world.”**

Pope Francis, Address, 11th April 2018

