

# An Invitation to Parish Partnerships *Building Hope*

**Dear Parish Team, Chair of PPC and Chair of PFC**

As confirmed by the 3,000 responses to the *Building Hope* Task Force consultation, there is a widespread desire for renewal in our faith communities. All the signs around us indicate that, to achieve this, parishes will need to work more formally in partnership with other parishes. Whether in groupings already established, where they are working well, or in new partnerships, finding thought-through and appropriate ways to develop and share personnel and resources will be imperative. Rather than simply seeking to maintain our present outlook and structures, ‘new thinking and a shift of mind-set in everyone’ are essential (Archdiocese of Dublin, *Statement of Mission*, February 2022).

## **Easter reflection and dialogue**

With all this in mind, the first phase of the *Building Hope* implementation will take place in parishes of the Archdiocese this Easter through Pentecost to Corpus Christi – a nine-week period of parish reflection and dialogue. The reading of Archbishop Farrell’s Easter Pastoral Letter, *Living the Hope of Easter* is the first step.

Then, in each parish, the parish team, the parish pastoral council and parish finance committee are asked to come together as one **‘Parish Building Hope Leadership Group’**. The Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council or another person chosen in their place for this role, should chair the *Building Hope* Leadership Group. Please read the *Building Hope* Task Force Report, available [here](#), before beginning this process which will continue over the coming year in the synodal-style with which we have become familiar.

## **The process we are undertaking**

When the parish’s *Building Hope* Leadership Group, has reflected prayerfully together on the [Archdiocese of Dublin Statement of Mission](#) and the Task Force Report they are asked to review the parish profile material provided for each parish from the Boundaries Commission and from the Finance Secretariat as well as the questions posed about parish life and parish partnerships into the future.

- Before the *Building Hope* Leadership Group comes to a final partnership determination, the parish profile material should be shared widely and at a parish gathering. This is a very important part of the process intended to encourage as many parishioners as would wish to join in the dialogue and discernment.
- Training and resources for holding the parish *Building Hope* gathering will be provided as was the case for the Synodal Pathway discussions. Parishes are encouraged to think of creative ways of engaging with parishioners on the margins too and of drawing them into further conversation over the coming months.
- The *Building Hope* Leadership Group may call on the animators and small group leaders who were trained for the Synod gatherings, and who may also be available for this process.
- Both the leadership group conversation and the parish conversation should take place in each parish between Easter Sunday (April 17) and Pentecost (June 5).

“The church is continually changing and adapting. The people of God are a people on the move, a people on pilgrimage through life and history. This is how the church actually is; never static, but continually responding to a changing cultural context”

– Archbishop Dermot Farrell

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- During the period between Ascension (May 29) through Pentecost and up to the Feast of Mary, Mother of the Church (June 6), a week of prayer to the Holy Spirit for the renewal of the Church in Dublin will take place in each parish in the Archdiocese. In that same week and having reviewed the responses from their *Building Hope* parish gathering, the *Building Hope* Leadership Group, should meet to distil from the various conversations which have taken place, the best possible parish partnership with other parishes.
- If it has not already taken place, it would be good that the *Building Hope* Leadership Group consult with other such groups in their area, so that parish submissions, where possible, exhibit coherence, or if not, indicate the questions arising locally.
- Following these discussions, before the Feast of Corpus Christi (June 19), ONE submission from each parish is made by the Chair of the *Building Hope* Leadership Group in digital format and using your specific parish code, both of which will be provided.

Each parish is encouraged to pray the [Building Hope Prayer](#) at your Masses and at each meeting and parish gathering throughout this important Easter journey towards pastoral renewal in the Archdiocese.

### **The *Building Hope* parish resources**

To assist in the process, the following material is provided:

1. *Living the Hope of Easter*: Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Pastoral Letter, Easter 2022
2. Archdiocese of Dublin Statement of Mission
3. *Building Hope*: The Principles which inform our Pastoral Strategy (ref. Task Force Report)
4. Parish Partnerships, Initial Phase: Process and Timeline
5. *Building Hope* Response Form
6. The *Building Hope* Prayer
7. Your Parish Profile materials (under separate cover)

The *Building Hope* tab on the diocesan website, [www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie), will be updated regularly and the email [buildinghope@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:buildinghope@dublindiocese.ie) will be accessible for registration of animators and for queries.

### **Priests and people working together**

Thank you for engaging in this significant initiative of co-responsibility – priests and people together – as we ready ourselves creatively to embrace a new way of being Church at the service of the mission we have been given. The challenges that emerged during the COVID-19 crisis have taught us that when change is required it is possible, more so than we imagined. Let us take hold of our role as witnesses to the truth and joy of Easter, as we plan for our future together.

Wishing you every blessing this Easter season,



**Very Rev Gareth Byrne, VG**

**Chair of the *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group**

**Easter 2022**

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