

MOUNT MERRION PARISH DISCERNMENT PROCESS



**Towards the
formation of a new
Parish Pastoral Council**



Key Features of our Parish Discernment Process

- Linked to a prayerful parish journey beginning on the Feast of Corpus Christi in June, continuing through the summer – offering some space for reflection, to September – bringing new beginnings and a fresh start.
- Recognises and affirms active involvement and engagement in our parish.
- Inclusive of our whole parish community.
- Responds to the need ‘to recover a contemplative spirit’ as guided by Pope Francis in *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*).
- Continues our transition towards ‘prayerful discernment’ of our new Parish Pastoral Council.



“What is important is the whole journey by which we arrive at the mission the Lord entrusts to us... when the Lord gives a mission, He always has us enter into a process, a process of purification, a process of discernment, a process of obedience, a process of prayer.”

Pope Francis



Parish Discernment Process Timeline 2017

STAGE I: PERIOD OF PARISH PRAYER, REFLECTION & DISCERNMENT

Sunday Corpus Christi – Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

18 June: **This feast marks the beginning of our Parish Discernment Process towards the formation of our new Parish Pastoral Council 2017-2020.**

As Christ becomes fully present to us in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the sacramental sign of His presence and His endless love, we are challenged to become the body of Christ – chosen, blessed, broken and given for others, poured out in willingness to serve others, to spread the good news, by allowing God to act in communion with us and through us in communion with others. As St Teresa of Ávila too reminds us;

“Christ has no body on earth now but yours”

Could you, or someone you know, help our parish by offering to serve as a Parish Pastoral Council member? This discernment period invites each of us to prayerfully reflect upon that question.

June to Sept. Parish prayer each weekend invoking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we discern the right path for our parish and the people who will help shape it as members of the Parish Pastoral Council 2017-2020.

STAGE 2: DISCERNMENT MEETINGS

Tuesday 5th & Thursday 7th September:

Discernment/Information Meetings for all those who may have an interest in becoming a member of the new Parish Pastoral Council. (attend either meeting).

Purpose:

To ensure that attendees are fully informed of the roles, duties and responsibilities of the Council and of the Council members as outlined in the Constitution and to ensure that reflection, prayer and discernment are central to the Council selection process.

Nomination Forms will be distributed at this forum.





Explanation of Our Parish Discernment Process:

Our current Parish Pastoral Council completes its term of office in September. In this context we begin, on Corpus Christi – the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ – a Parish Discernment Process towards the formation of a new Council. Crucially, this process will be linked to a prayer journey from Corpus Christi, over the summer months, to September and the new beginnings which it invites.

Parish Invitation: We invite you, all parishioners and all those who join us in prayer here in Mount Merrion, to engage in this process through prayerful reflection and contemplation of;

- the spiritual and pastoral needs of our parish,
- how they can be best served and
- by whom.

Gratitude: We would like to thank the very many volunteers already active in the various parish groups – some 300+ people at the last count! In addition, the life of a parish is all about building a welcoming faith community, so we are also very grateful to everyone who joins us here at Mass and in that joining helps to build a sense of God – a community – and carries it from here into daily life.

Role of Parish Pastoral Council: The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative leadership group through which

priest(s) and lay people work collaboratively. Its existence is based on our understanding of what it means to be part of our church: all people, many gifts, but filled with the same Spirit. The role, duties and responsibilities of the Council are outlined in detail in the Parish Pastoral Council Constitution (copies of which are available in the Parish Office and on the Parish website).



Although not involved in the day-to-day administration of the parish, the Council plays a vital and collaborative role in discerning and planning for the spiritual and pastoral needs and challenges of the parish. Its focus is on the four pillars of parish life: Prayer and Liturgy, Building Community, Educating in Faith and Reaching Out/Working for Justice. The Council's work is also underpinned by our Parish Mission Statement, guided by our Parish Pastoral Plan and takes cognisance of our diocesan-designated parish grouping' which is inclusive of Kilmacud and Clonskeagh parishes.

Time commitment: The time commitment required is typically 9 or 10 Council meetings per academic year (currently between 7.30-9pm on the first Tues of every month) plus further time depending on the projects undertaken by the Council. The term of office is normally 3 years.



Balance: We seek in Council membership, a balance of skills and experience and of course, where possible, an appropriate gender, age and racial balance.

Who: Ideally, we seek a diverse group of people with an interest in faith / church who will represent the whole parish, notwithstanding any particular parish interest areas/experience, and who will rely in its deliberations on the Holy Spirit and be guided by Gospel values. By way of example, we seek people of vision, people involved, people of prayer, people who listen, quiet reflective people, people who bring out the best in others, people who are searching, people who are new to faith/parish, people who are easy to work with, who are willing to learn, people who are missionary in spirit.

Personal Invitation: If you feel that some of these words are speaking directly to YOU and that YOU may have something to offer, we ask that you prayerfully reflect during this time of



parish discernment and consider putting your gifts and strengths at the service of the parish. After the summer, the next stage will be for you to explore your interest further by attending one of the discernment & information meetings (on Tues 5th and Thurs 7th Sept), in advance of the Parish AGM (on 26th Sept). Nomination Forms will be distributed at these early September meetings. As you read this now, if you feel a bit uncertain about becoming involved, but equally have some interest in being part of a group planning the way forward for the parish, you are very likely a person who could bring something to the Parish Pastoral Council. Again, we would ask that you prayerfully contemplate your potential involvement during this summer period and then come along to one of the early September information and discernment meetings.

Questions: If you have any questions as the process evolves, please contact Fr Tony or the out-going Council Chairperson, Kealan O'Reilly or any of the Parish Pastoral Council members. Thank you.



Our Parish Discernment Prayer



Guide our hearts and minds as we come to discern and form our new Parish Pastoral Council. May we work together to build our parish into a vibrant welcoming community that reflects gospel values of love, justice and peace:

We pray to the Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.



Christ has no body now but yours

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Attributed to St. Teresa of Ávila, (1515-1582)



**Love
Not
Judgement**

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