

Parish Gathering: Partnerships for *Building Hope*

***Building Hope* - Framework for Pastoral Renewal**

The consultation process undertaken by the *Building Hope* Task Force in 2021 highlighted the key dimensions valued by people in their faith communities which provide a framework for pastoral renewal within and among parishes.

The framework gives a focus for the discussions and discernment around pastoral renewal which all parishes will now undertake. It will shape the strategic plan at diocesan and parish levels.



1

Please submit your Parish *Building Hope* Response by 19th June (The Feast of Corpus Christi) or as soon as possible thereafter (one digital submission per parish).

Submitted By: *

Please insert your name below

Audrey Marie O'Sullivan

2

Your Role: *

- Chair of Parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group
- Chair of Parish Pastoral Council

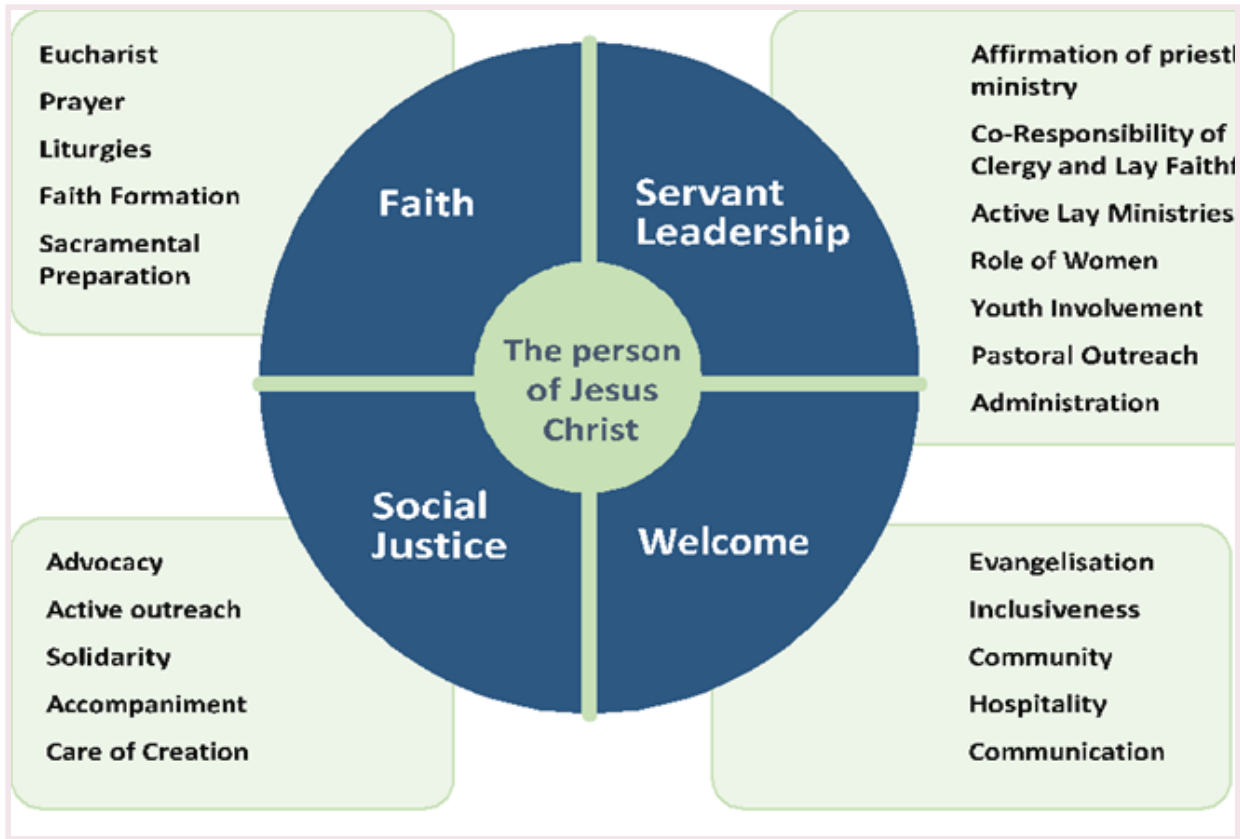
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Please enter your parish code: *

(Your parish code was supplied via separate email - one unique identifying code per parish)

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Please take some time to reflect on each of the four key dimensions of the *Building Hope* Framework for Pastoral Renewal (below). You are then invited to respond to the questions that follow.



FAITH

4

Looking at the **FAITH** dimension, what is working well in your parish?

- Eucharist
- Prayer
- Liturgies
- Faith Formation
- Sacramental Preparation
-

5

Why?

1. Good Mass times (Good frequency).
2. There is a lovely church ambience which impacts experience.
3. Music. The Parish has four music groups which sing at each of the four weekend Masses.
4. Homilies (some good points).
5. Liturgies (and Liturgy groups): Funerals (families very pleased). Baptisms, Holy Communions, Penitential Services, Service of Light and Taize prayer. All highlighted by groups acknowledging

6

Looking at the **FAITH** dimension, what is in need of development in your parish?

- Eucharist
- Prayer
- Liturgies
- Faith Formation
- Sacramental Preparation
- Other

7

In what way?

The feedback coming back is that:

1. We need proactive greeters at each of the Masses (as a form of witness and welcome).
2. There is a need for "silent" prayer i) during Masses (spaces of pause for prayer); and ii) silent prayer in more formal offerings to parishioners.
3. There is need for "meditation".
4. There is vital need for good cross generational faith formation programmes in a secular world, for i) children; ii) young adults; and iii) adults. We need the means to grow in faith as we mature. These programmes need to be well designed, relevant, informative, and regularly reviewed. These faith formation programmes need to be delivered by well trained individuals committed in faith, both clergy and lay.
5. The importance of the homily was noted and the necessity of getting this 'right'.
6. It was stated that, Sacramental preparation works well, "thanks to teachers". Some concerns

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

8

Looking at the dimension of **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**, what is working well in your parish?

- Affirmation of priestly ministry
- Co-Responsibility of Clergy and Lay Faithful
- Active Lay Ministries
- Role of Women
- Youth Involvement
- Pastoral Outreach
- Administration
-

9

Why?

For affirmation of priestly ministry: the visibility of clergy before and after Masses works well. Otherwise, no explanations were provided. However, there is a perception that the areas of i) Co-Responsibility (Clergy and Lay Faithful); ii) Active Lay Ministries; and iii) Role of Women, in the Parish are working well in practice, subject to comments below.

In terms of Administration: it is also recognised the parish office of Mount Merrion is well run.

10

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-

11

In what way?

1. There needs to be "real" and "genuine" co-responsibility of clergy and the lay faithful. The model needs to be one of "equal partnership" and this model will no doubt be challenging for some clergy.
2. Role of Women: There is strong and important feedback provided on this theme. It is like the prophet shouting their message from the rooftops. It cannot any longer be justifiable ignored. The feedback indicates that women must have equal roles of leadership in all aspects of the broader Church (as deacons and priests). A great error of injustice and judgement has occurred in the Church, in failing to acknowledge the proper role of women as wise leaders and this error must be rectified without delay.

WELCOME

12

Looking at the **WELCOME** dimension, what is working well in your parish?

- Evangelisation
- Inclusiveness

Community

Hospitality

Communication

Other

13

Why?

In offering hospitality (and meeting and greeting) one group responded "it feels like standing in the shoes of Jesus".

In terms of Community: there is a good sense of community among "active" parishioners

14

Looking at the **WELCOME** dimension, what is in need of development in your parish?

Evangelisation

Inclusiveness

Community

Hospitality

Communication

Social Media - Can we be better?

15

In what way?

1. Evangelisation: it is hard to speak up on matters of faith as a Catholic in Ireland (due to recent scandals in the Church). It also feels counter-cultural and uncomfortable and we need courage. To gain courage we need strong community and support (i.e. through relevant community groups; faith formation programmes and "fellowship").
2. Inclusiveness: the Church needs to be consistently welcoming of: i) LGBTQ+ (and remove offensive church language and attitudes about such groups as this offends families); ii) those who are separated and divorced (and isolated and alone in the Parish community); iii) foster hospitality towards immigrants of different nationalities (those who are culturally different) and who are living away from their countries of origin.
3. Could Communications in general be improved and social media in particular be used to bring people together. To explain i) what resources are available for people; ii) where they can get information on St Vincent de Paul services; iii) what groups are socialising for tea, coffee

SOCIAL JUSTICE

16

Looking at the **SOCIAL JUSTICE** dimension, what is working well in your parish?

- Advocacy
- Active outreach
- Solidarity
- Accompaniment
- Care of Creation
- Other

17

Why?

1. Active Outreach: there is a consistently generous level of parish support for all collections, especially the "special" collections.
2. Solidarity: There is a very strong Mount Merrion Visitors group for the ill and elderly in the parish community and a friendship group for the elderly. There is also a very active St Vincent de Paul group supporting those in need.

18

Looking at the **SOCIAL JUSTICE** dimension, what is in need of development in your parish?

Advocacy

Active outreach

Solidarity

Accompaniment

Care of Creation

More Projects to attract Young People; and Tran

19

In what way?

1. Active outreach for young people: there is a genuine concern (and sadness) that our younger people are less engaged with the Church. This makes the older practising generation feel sad. There is an urgent necessity to think about initiatives to capture the mind, imagination and hearts of our beautiful young people.
2. Transparency: some parishioners have raised feedback about transparency of financial contributions local and diocesan. Parishioners would like to seek greater transparency as to where their funding goes. A suggestion has been made of the parish providing regular information on the breakdown of i) financial contributions and ii) special collections, which

PARTNERSHIPS FOR BUILDING HOPE

20

Of the strengths you have identified in your parish, which could be shared in a local parish partnership?

1. Funeral Ministry
2. Music and Choirs
3. Lay Liturgy
4. Availability of the parish community centre

21

With which three, four or five parishes would it make good sense for your parish to be in local partnership?

The material you submit here, suggesting possible parish partnerships, will be considered firstly by your local parish *Building Hope* Leadership Group, following which each parish's submission will be collated by the diocesan *Building Hope* Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group and presented to Archbishop Dermot for his consideration. Further discussion will take place with parishes in the autumn.

Following through on the *Building Hope* Task Force Report, all the material submitted will give focus for further discussion and discernment around pastoral renewal at both parish and diocesan levels.

Mount Merrion Parish with:

1. Donnybrook;
2. UCD (recognising this is not a parish. However, there is valuable potential in i) outreach and ii) connecting with the high numbers of young people living in the neighbourhood and given the urgent need and feedback to outreach and engage with young people today).
3. Booterstown
4. Kilmacud
5. Dundrum
6. Blackrock

Each of these parishes are geographically proximate to each other.

22

Your own Parish Name:

The Church of St Therese, Mount Merrion

23

Additional comments

Thank you for the opportunity for us to share the feedback of our parishioners who came together for the Building Hope gathering in Mount Merrion. I would be very happy to discuss any points of clarification, as necessary, in the coming weeks.

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