



Introduction

Archbishop Dermot Farrell established the Building Hope Taskforce in April 2021. The Taskforce proposed a strategy by which we, as a faith community and as an archdiocese, can be renewed for the mission which Christ has entrusted to us all.

Archbishop Farrell said in his Pastoral Letter at Easter, *'Our primary purpose is to accompany people today towards an encounter with the Lord Jesus. This undoubtedly requires new ways of looking and thinking; it requires a shift in mind-set; and will need responsible stewardship'*.

Each parish community was invited, as part of the Archdiocese's Building Hope strategy to begin to reflect on how best to respond to the pastoral situation in which we find ourselves. In response to this invitation, 40 parishioners attended a Building Hope meeting in the parish centre on Tuesday, 7th of June.

The parishioners examined our parish profile and then responded to the Framework for Pastoral Renewal developed by the Taskforce. The final segment of the evening was to look at other parishes with whom we could share our talents. There was tangible energy in the meeting and it was a rewarding experience for all who attended.

A report from our meeting has been provided to the Archdiocese and as we journey together and discern our future, we will be given more guidance by the Building Hope Pastoral Strategy Implementation Group.

Over the Summer we will review the inputs to our Synod Report and to the Building Hope Taskforce, coming together again in September in a parish meeting, to identify new initiatives which will support our strong faith community and help maintain it into the future.

Thank you to everyone who participated and we look forward to welcoming all parishioners at our next meeting in September.

We wish you a safe and happy Summer.

St. Laurence O'Toole, Kilmacud

Building Hope Implementation Group

Views on Parish Profile

Population Views expressed:

- The parish profile does not include a category for single people. It was felt this would be useful information to include.
- In relation to the low attendance figures, compared to the number who call themselves Catholics - some people felt that people today are more likely to shop around for a mass that suits them or for a better liturgy.
- Some felt that there were too many churches and less were needed.
- People wondered what has changed that makes people walk away or not attend. A view was put forward that it was not just the scandals, i.e., priestly abuse and the cover up. It is just people seem more self-sufficient and do not need the church as a crutch.
- As seen at the Children's mass, young people at primary school level are interested and want to contribute to mass. However it was suggested that religious formation at secondary school was lacking and young people move away from the church at this stage of their lives. The linkages of Church to Schools was discussed as a way of getting young people and parents back involved.

Liturgical Celebrations:

- We are lucky to have a good number of priests in our parish but the advance of deacons is too slow. Is there clarity on the events/ services where the priest is essential and others that could be presided over by deacons, laity etc
- No new inventive ways of handling liturgical services.
- Laity involvement and specifically a place for women in the church should be prioritised and the laity engagement should be supported by good formation / training and support
- Youth and parents not involved enough and this led to interesting views on making mass, sacraments and liturgies more attractive. In similar vein, could we have more music and celebration, and the regular use of the projectors to help people participate with regular prayer / hymns displayed or indeed instructions on standing, kneeling, sitting, passing baskets etc.

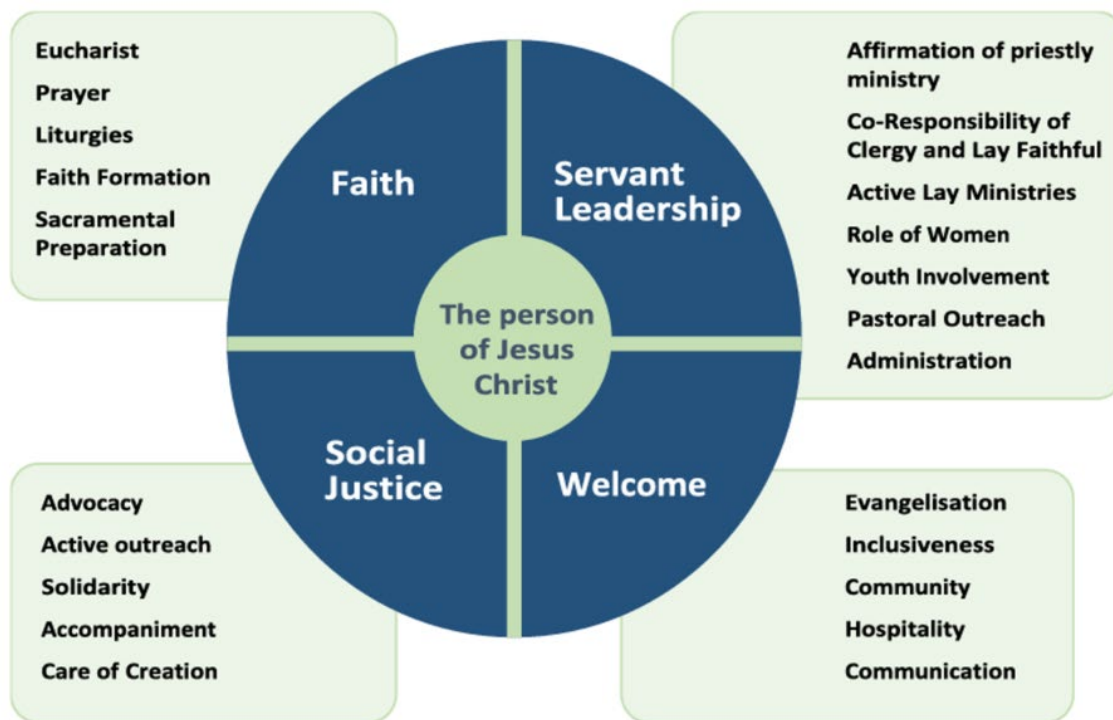
Collections:

- Family Finance Contributions are on the increase, which is against the trend.
- With the reduction in the number of people using cash we need more tap machines and a QR code on the baskets might increase donations to Share / Common Fund collections.
- Remind people weekly that they can use the tap machine and / or set up a direct debit. Simplify the Direct Debit form on the parish website. In terms of bequests / wills etc , a regular reminder about this and indicate, for example, the legal title of the Parish should a person like to include this. More active promotion of the charitable status tax relief that's available and the refunds possible. At a structural level could this be more streamlined and not require form filling!

Location:

- Kilmacud is a fabulous location with a wealth of schools.
- Deanery map needs updating to get a better clustering of adjacent parishes together.

Framework for Pastoral Renewal



Faith Dimension

Eucharist, Liturgies, Sacramental preparation are working well. The 'Do This in Memory' programme for faith formation; the Baptism Team. the Easter Retreat; Music at Mass; The Christmas Nativity play; and the Active Retirement / Senior Citizens Group. The Christmas nativity play is making an impression while music is an important and core part of the liturgy.

Prayer and Faith Formation were considered in need of development. Suggestions included; Sunday School for young children; Bible Studies in Church; Providing different methods for prayer (bookmarks for young people; student prayers); Treats / Social Club for children and teenagers after mass.

Today faith is not attractive. We need to move to sharing a focus on faith as love rather than rules. Send out a message of a simple faith model. Consider whether there is an excessive focus on mass and mass attendance as distinct from people practicing the faith through the good lives they lead and their behaviour and conduct in their homes, families and the wider community

Others felt that we needed to go back to basics, more confessions, more adoration. Consider the appointment of Deacons in Kilmacud in the future.

More is needed to encourage the youth. Maybe we could a youth officer/minister. Encourage the youth to join The Legion of Mary or go on Pilgrimages There is a need for a youth group – maybe something different outside of the church structure, maybe bible classes to pass on the faith with the parable stories. There is a Montessori based faith formation programme called catechesis of the good shepherd which could be used. We

could use Faith 2000 or Net Ministries Music is a good way to reach the youth – draw them in then – have a listening encounter with them- creative listening. Maybe a book club or a Bible club.

The phrase “faith is caught not taught” resonated with the group and we need to create a parish culture and ethos that allows faith to be caught by how we act collectively and individually.

Servant Leadership

Our parish is aware and responding to the needs of others. There is good leadership between clergy and lay people. We have approachable, hardworking priests who put a lot of effort and thought into their liturgies, especially funerals.

Good co-operation between clergy and laity. Lay Ministers work well. In terms of affirmation, this is important and laity / volunteers need to be and should feel affirmed at parish and diocesan level.

Women are actively involved and welcomed in the parish. The role of women and making best use of their talents was identified as well as the need for the priests to encourage women in leadership roles, but it was acknowledged that the former Parish Council and current Finance Committee are led by women.

Youth involvement is small and limited to choir at 6.00pm Saturday evening mass. Pastoral outreach is also limited. To support outreach and to get people back active and practicing, volunteers need more training and support and this also needs to be coupled with full time / part time parish pastoral roles/ youth leader roles etc. This may require several people operating to a detailed and agreed job description. Could we get young deacons appointed?

We need more volunteers, particularly younger parishioners. Training needs to be provided to volunteers including in pastoral outreach. Increase involvement of youth in liturgies and wider parish activities.

We need a youth development programme for the faith of all young people. Taking sacramental preparation out of schools was also discussed.

Social Justice

Advocacy, Active Outreach, Accompaniment, Solidarity and Care of Creation were felt to be working well in our parish by some, while others felt that people did not see Social Justice as important as faith development.

The strong principles of young people – examples Haiti, Darkness into Light, St Vincent de Paul was mentioned as an opportunity to ‘Tap into the youth in the area’.

Communicate Social Justice in Action in our parish – eg Sr Irene, who lives in Stillorgan, is currently working in Ukraine. Raise awareness to help her work; the work of Vincent de Paul; young people in action.

A volunteer coordinator to nurture social justice in our community was suggested.

Talks on interesting subjects connected to social justice. A more formal approach to environmental sustainability and ‘care of creation’.

Welcome

Inclusiveness was felt to be strong and our parish is seen as a community of welcome, with good communication. Uncertainty as to implications and what is involved in evangelisation. We have no framework for Evangelisation in our parish. The example we set and how we live is critical but there may be a need for more active evangelisation and how can this be done, by ourselves and/or paid parish workers.

For those youth and young families who attend communion and confirmation and funerals etc , how can they continue to be welcomed back and actively encouraged?

There was consensus on the need to explicitly call out and welcome LGBTQ+, divorced, marginalised etc and ensure we are inclusive, compassionate and caring. There was a strong sense that other parishes may have good practice and learnings to share with us and that the outreach to people on the margins necessarily requires employment of individuals in full or part time capacities

While the family choir and mass is excellent, there is merit in an active family ministry and maybe having a process where parents and youths greet other families into the church. The question raised was – what's here for families?

In terms of welcome, could we re-energise the hospitality ministry, have family and community fun days or events. We discussed the example in the UK of regular tea/ coffee after mass in parish centres. Remind people of the coffee dock available after daily mass.

Formally ask new parishioners to register with the parish office and do so weekly in the parish newsletter. Have a welcome pack for new parishioners. We should ensure that regularly, from the altar, we welcome new people and visitors to the parish and continue the practice of having a person introduce the Sunday Mass, thank the priest for being with us, etc.

It would benefit to know the numbers looking in on our webcam so we can connect with them.

Use better use of local media – be more positive and take control.

Future Partnerships.

Balally, Newtownpark Avenue, Dundrum, Foxrock and Mount Merrion. Clonskeagh is on the outer limits.

There was general agreement that we, as a parish, can learn from and share learnings with others to the betterment of parish life in the diocese.

Strengths and Talents to share:

Kilmacud is very strong on Children's mass, and music while Dundrum has a strong youth club. Kilmacud has strong liturgy group.

More utilisation of Parish centre of parish community events in Kilmacud.

Look at how lay ministries in adjoining parishes work eg Balally, Sandyford/ Foxrock (youth), Donnybrook (pastoral worker) etc.