

# Diocese of Kerry



## Resource Book for Parish Pastoral Councils

*September 2017 – August 2018*

# Introduction

The Church exists to introduce people to Jesus Christ. It is not about a building; it's not about fulfilling obligations; it's not only about supplying the sacraments; it's not about programmes or services: it's about following the person of Jesus Christ. The mission of the Church is to make disciples.

Disciples are followers who are growing to love God and love others as Jesus taught us. At the heart of Jesus's message is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. The Church endeavours to proclaim that Kingdom. God reigns where we live as a community in which all are respected, where people's deepest needs are met and where justice is practised.

The parish is the local church. It is a community of people, who believe in Jesus, who listen to the "Good News" and try to live it out and who gather for the breaking of the bread, in a particular place to celebrate and pray together. Introducing people to Jesus Christ is the essence of what Church and parish are about. Evangelisation is the word that describes this. It is a response to the mandate of Jesus: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Mt 28:19-20).

The essential tasks of the parish are creating a welcoming community, worship, faith formation and caring for those in need. The Parish Pastoral Council is the group responsible for providing leadership in the parish. The PPC is the vehicle which provides the opportunity for the parish priest/moderator and people to work together as partners in their task of furthering the mission of the parish. It may be described as the "engine of the parish". As a group, they think and plan for the parish on an ongoing basis in order to respond to its present and future needs.

The PPC has an advisory role, the parish priest/moderator consults the people because he knows that wisdom resides with them; it has a planning role, it carries out its task of leadership by identifying pastoral needs, reflecting on them and making an effective response; it has a coordinating role, it recognises, supports and resources the various ministry groups in the parish. Productive meetings enable PPCs to function well.

Careful planning before, during and after the meeting is required to ensure that they are effective and that time is well used and that members participate fully. Key to this is the preparation of the agenda. It is the responsibility of the priest/moderator and the chairperson to prepare the agenda.

This resource book is offered as an aid to preparing the agenda. It includes six discussion documents which explore different aspects of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. As prayer is central to the work and life of the PPC, six prayer services are provided. To assist with planning, a calendar of significant dates in the diocese during the coming year is included.

# Pastoral Plan 2016 – 2020

## Our Purpose

Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ joyfully  
through witness, community, worship and service.

*Fógair dea-scéala an Tiarna Íosa Críost le lúcháir,  
trí fhianaise, trí adhradh agus trí sheirbhís*

## Our Vision

To be a welcoming compassionate faith community,  
with Christ at its centre,  
calling forth the gifts of all  
for the good of the world  
to the glory of God.

*A bheith inár gcomhlúadar creidimh fáilteach truachróíoch le Críost ina lár  
ag glaoch amach ar bhuanna gach duine ar mhaithe leis an saol chun glóire Dé.*

## Goal 1

Develop welcoming, faith-filled communities relevant to the age we live in.  
*Comhlúadair fháilteacha lánchreidmheacha sáite sa saol ina mairimid a chur chun cinn*

## Goal 2

Enable people to deepen their faith and proclaim the Good News of Jesus.  
*É a chur ar a gcumas do dhaoine a gcreideamh a dhoimhniú agus Dea-Scéal Íosa a fhógairt*

## Goal 3

Be a catalyst for compassion and justice.  
*Bí ag griogadh le trócaire agus cóir a chur chun cinn.*



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# Discussion 1

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## How can parish support family life?

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- What are some of the challenges faced by those considering marriage today?
- What are the main concerns of people rearing children today?
- What are the supports in our parish for families trying to hand on faith today?

### Step 2: Take time to reflect

The family is the primary context within which Christian formation takes place. 'the family in fact constitutes a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society.

Family Ministry, as well as seeking to facilitate faith development within the family, will always find itself reaching out to families who are struggling in one way or another. Families who have members with special needs often appreciate any effort that may be made to support them in the community. Where there is a breakdown in family life, helping the family to maintain a sense of family community, even where people are no longer living together, can make a useful contribution. Outreach to families suffering from deprivation, and often disconnected from the church as well as from society generally, is a major concern for Catholic parishes, organisations and groups. The Christian community defines itself by how well it supports families in need.

*Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland,  
Irish Episcopal conference, Veritas, 2011, page 120*

### Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the reality for families in our parish and taken time to reflect on the obligation of the Christian community in relation to families, explore the various possibilities of how our parish could support family life.

### Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to support family life.
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

### Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- a. Did the action achieve its purpose?
- b. What worked well?
- c. Is there a follow-up action needed?

# Discussion 2

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## Engaging with young people post-Confirmation

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- What are some of the ways in which our parish supports young people preparing for Confirmation?
- What are the main ways in which our parish engages with young people post- Confirmation?
- What are the resources in our locality and in our diocese for supporting young people's relationship with the faith community?

### Step 2: Take time to reflect

It is of the utmost importance that adolescents are helped to see the local Church as a living and vibrant community that cares for them and will support them. The development of post-confirmation programmes that encourage young people, already initiated into membership of the church, to consider personally and take responsibility for their own faith development, as mentioned above, would be very constructive.

Support for this personal faith journey should be offered in the home, within the parish community and at school. The parish should bear in mind the wider pastoral context of the adolescent and seek, in co-operation with parents/guardians, to provide a space within the parish community where young people feel welcome.

Adolescents, today, are often crying out for a place in which they can be themselves, be at ease with others, and feel acknowledged and supported for who they are, rather than feel continually overburdened, pressured and suffocated. Good liturgy, particularly appropriate music, may create the right ambience for worship. The parish should seek to respond, too to the need adolescents have to find space for reflection and prayer. Group activities, particularly those associated with justice, service and helping those most in need, can also be constructive. An element of good fun, being together and working for others, can be very beneficial in helping young people come to terms with themselves and with others. Pilgrimage too, and perhaps especially preparation for and participation in world Youth Day, can provide an extraordinary catechetical moment. Youth groups, folk groups, prayer groups, clubs and sports associations, linked with parish, can give young people a supportive

peer group in which to grow, while at the same time highlighting their parish community's care for them.

*Taken from: Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, Irish Episcopal conference, Veritas, 2011, page 152 – 15*

### Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the reality of the parish's engagement with young people, explore the various possibilities of how our parish could enhance its connection with young people. What can we do for those who have received the sacrament of Confirmation that would build upon their joy and enthusiasm?

### Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to engage with young people post-Confirmation;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

### Step 5: When the action is completed, take time to review it by exploring:

- a. Did the action achieve its purpose?
- b. What worked well?
- c. Is there a follow-up action needed?



# Discussion 3

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## The challenge of immigration

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- Are there immigrants living in our parish?  
*Check out [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie) for up-to-date figures from Census 2016*
- In what ways do they participate in our community?
- What are the challenges facing immigrants in our area?

### Step 2: Take time to reflect

In his message, 'Church without Frontiers, Mother to All', Pope Francis reminds us how Jesus identifies himself with strangers and outcasts: 'Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognised in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches.'

Pope Francis has made migration a signature issue of his pontificate. He has spoken out on behalf of the migrants and 'the globalisation of indifference', continually emphasising: 'in an age of such vast movements of migration, large numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions.' He stresses the need to make efforts to ensure that 'the dignity and the centrality of the human person is protected, promoting solidarity and dialogue between peoples.'

Large numbers of Irish people continue to travel abroad in search of new opportunities. While their departure creates a void in Irish families and parishes, our communities, villages and towns have also become home to thousands of new residents from all over the world: migrants who have left their home in the hope of starting a new life filled with endless possibility and opportunity. Often these journeys bring uncertainty and unfamiliarity to the migrant and their families. This in turn can lead to significant strain on their emotional and mental wellbeing.

*Taken from: Church without frontiers, Mother to all  
Council for Immigrants – Irish Episcopal Conference 2015*

### Step 3: Explore various options

Having reflected on the reality of immigrants in our parish, and on the challenges facing immigrants, are there ways in which we can be more inclusive and reach out to them?

### Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to respond to the challenges facing immigrants;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

### Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- a. Did the action achieve its purpose?
- b. What worked well?
- c. Is there a follow-up action needed?

# Discussion 4

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## Responding to families presenting a child for baptism

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- In our parish what is the process when a parent /parents/guardians wish to have their child baptised?
- What formation is provided for parents/guardians of those who are to be baptised?
- How is the Sacrament of Baptism celebrated in our parish?

### Step 2: Take time to reflect

The three sacraments of initiation, (baptism, first communion and confirmation) are times when the parish's welcoming ministry is to the fore. They are also times of substantial interaction with people who do not frequent church, as well as with those who do.

Increasingly with baptism the focus is on the family having an experience of welcome. In some parishes one of the baptism team visits the family, makes them feel comfortable with the process, and then accompanies them as a familiar face at the ceremony. After on ceremony, a mother turned to the baptism team companion, and said, 'I never realised that baptism had anything to do with welcome!' the penny had dropped.

In another parish, the process involved being welcomed by the Sunday congregation and participating in sessions with other parents. Afterwards, a mother said that she had come looking for what she called a 'drive-through baptism', but was delighted with what she had experienced instead. The way we go about baptism has this potential to be a heart-warming experience of welcome that touches people deep within

*Taken from: Tomorrow's Parish, Donal Harrington, Columba Press, 2015, page 1*

### Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the present reality for parents/guardians presenting a child for baptism, how could our parish enhance the experience as faith-filled and inclusive for parents/guardians and families?

### Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to enhance the experience of families presenting a child for baptism;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

### Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- a. Did the action achieve its purpose?
- b. What worked well?
- c. Is there a follow-up action needed?

# Discussion 5

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## Praying for our Dead

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- When someone dies in the parish, how does the parish minister to the family?
- In what ways can the faith community act as a support to the bereaved family during the days of the funeral?
- What roles could lay people take in the faith community's prayer for the person who has died?

### Step 2: Take time to reflect

The Christian community since the earliest times has accompanied people through providing a ritual framework within which a funeral takes place. These rites are acts of public worship at which a number of elements are involved: God is praised; the Resurrection of Jesus is proclaimed conveying the hope of being gathered together again in God's kingdom; prayers are offered for the soul of the deceased person; their body is honoured and the bereaved are consoled. Principles apply to these rites which can enrich the experience for the bereaved family and the wider community. Through these rituals, which express our faith in the Resurrection of Jesus, space is offered to the bereaved family to express grief and sorrow. They also provide an opportunity to celebrate the life and memory of the deceased person.

The principal aim of this process of reflection is to improve, where possible, the ministry of accompaniment and consolation to the bereaved, and the dignified and worthy celebration of funeral rites. These discussions take into account the changing reality of Irish society today. ... It looks to the future when the lay faithful will be more centrally involved in carrying out this ministry in our parishes. It also acknowledges the relative distance of many people from parish life and religious practice in recent times.

*Taken from: Funeral Ministry - Archdiocese of Dublin, September 2016*

### Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the present reality, and reflected on the changing nature of ministry, explore the various roles lay people in our parish could take at the time of a funeral.

### Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to explore how funeral ministry will progress in our parish;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

### Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- a. Did the action achieve its purpose?
- b. What worked well?
- c. Is there a follow-up action needed?

# Discussion 6

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## Enhancing our Parish Newsletter

### Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- What is the purpose of our parish newsletter? What do we want to achieve by publishing it?
- In what ways does it fulfil its purpose? What frustrates it?
- What role does it play in the parish sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with others?

### Step 2: Take time to reflect

The spoken word is supplemented by the written word in the parish's communication strategy. When examining the parish's communication tools, it's hard to beat the news-sheet or bulletin printed locally as a means of communication. It is underused at everyone's loss. For not only can the newsletter reinforce the words and teachings from the Sunday liturgy, it can build community in the parish and draw people together in a way that only a local production can.

*Taken from: How to survive working in a Catholic Parish, a guide for priests, volunteers and paid parish workers, Diana Klein and Bernard Cotter, Redemptorist Publications, 2016, page 105.*

If you have advertisements on the back of your bulletin, because that's how you pay for your bulletin, at least that makes sense and has a purpose. We think it's a poor purpose, but at least the ads do have a purpose. If you're advertising other people's stuff because you want to be a good neighbour and it's simply what's expected, change expectations and be a good neighbour in some other way. If you're advertising other people's stuff just because they asked you to, practice how to politely say no. If you're advertising other people's stuff because you've never considered your communication strategy, start considering it.

Jesus himself encourages us to have laser focus on God and his kingdom. It's actually a challenging and difficult thing to do. To get the whole parish focused is exponentially more so. Don't create more competition for yourself, your church, or for the Gospel. Stop advertising other people's events in your bulletin.

*Taken from: Tools for Rebuilding, 75 Really, Really Practical Ways to Make Your Parish Better, Michael White and Tom Corcoran, 2013 page 73.*

### Step 3: Explore various options

Having explored the effectiveness of our parish newsletter and reflected on what the reflections say about the potential of a parish newsletter, explore the various possibilities of how our parish newsletter could be enhanced.

### Step 4: Identify specific actions

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to enhance the experience of the parish newsletter;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

### Step 5: When the action is completed take time to review it by exploring:

- a. Did the action achieve its purpose?
- b. What worked well?
- c. Is there a follow-up action needed?



# Leading Prayer

Perhaps your experience of prayer has been of the rosary, prayer books, novenas...or maybe it has been one of silence; quiet, hopeful yearnings. These prayer resources offer a mixture of quiet moments, gentle reflections, common prayers, and scripture passages. Take your time to pray with them, so that when you come to lead the prayer, they have become your prayers. It is an opportunity to stand back from the tasks of our groups, and to reflect awhile...to wonder and to be rooted again in faith.

## Before you start to lead the prayer:

### Sacred Space

This offers a simple focal point to your prayer time. It allows us to centre on a candle, image or symbol during the prayer and appreciate that God doesn't always use words when speaking to us.

### Preparation

The time you put into being prepared and organised for leading the prayer moment, will make it easier for you, and more enriching for all of us. Write on your page. Highlight what you are saying and what others are saying. Arrive in time to allow yourself plenty of time to be organised.

### Involve others

Know how many readers you will need and give them the chance to read through their piece prior to the time of prayer. Not everyone is comfortable to read...so let people choose whether or not they wish to take part. Invite the group to put aside their folders/books and pens. Leave time and space so that people are not rushed. Trust the Holy Spirit!

## During the prayer:

### Pause and silence

During these times of prayer, use silence and pauses, to enable us to listen and hear what has been said, to allow the words to find an echo in our hearts and to let us be touched by God.

### Time and pace

Take your time with these prayer times, so that we can all slow down a little! When we are leading something, it can sometimes be hard to get a sense of our speed and pace. A good rule of thumb is to count...after a reading or a reflection, count to 30 slowly...if you have invited the group to think about a question for their own life, count to 40 slowly...gradually we will all become comfortable with the pace of the prayer

### Practice

For most of us, leading a prayer time is a new experience. And like all new things, it takes time to get used to. So let's practice, it will ease the way for all of us!

Finally, always remember,

*"Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in your midst"*

*Matthew 18:20*

# Prayer Resource 1

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## Placing our meeting in the presence of God

*To focus our attention during prayer and the meeting, it might be helpful to place a candle on a cloth, and to put tonight's agenda and the PPC resource book beside it.*

Leader      Loving God,  
untether us from our version of things  
and let us meet you anew  
and hear your call afresh.  
Stretch our hearts and vision  
in the direction of your generous heart.

All            *Stay with us, God of wisdom and compassion  
as we gather the bits and pieces of our agendae and projects  
and look amidst them for signs of your presence  
among us and around us.  
Lord, stay with us and show us your face.*

Reader 1    *Ephesians 3: 16 – 20a*

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Glory be to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine;

## Prayers of Intercession

- Reader 2      For our parish  
                  – may we centre our lives in Christ  
                  and let his light shine out in all we are and do  
*All*             *Spirit of Jesus Christ, make all things new.*
- Reader 2      For all parishioners  
                  - may they know the presence of Christ with them  
                  in all the bits and pieces of their everyday lives  
*All*             *Spirit of Jesus Christ, make all things new.*
- Reader 2      For ourselves as we celebrate Eucharist  
                  - may we come with hope and with faith,  
                  and allow it to connect with our lives and speak to our hearts  
*All*             *Spirit of Jesus Christ, make all things new.*
- Reader 2      For all who struggle  
                  – may they find hope in our faith in God  
                  and may we find ways to share faith with others  
*All*             *Spirit of Jesus Christ, make all things new.*
- Reader 2      For all people  
                  – may they experience parish  
                  as a place of welcome, compassion and inclusion  
*All*             *Spirit of Jesus Christ, make all things new.*
- All*             *Lord,*  
*with you among us,*  
*we meet and discuss all our concerns and challenges.*  
*May your way of love, truth, justice and kindness*  
*be our focus*  
*as we return now to serve*  
*in our families, workplaces and communities*  
*We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.*  
*Amen.*

# Prayer Resource 2

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## Celebrating the gift of family

*Place a candle on a cloth, and place some images of family around it.*

Leader      Encircle us, God.  
Encircle our lives  
with your loving embrace  
and let us rest in you.

Reader 1      *John 19:25-27*

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

All              *Let's look with fresh eyes*  
*- at our homes, at our community, at our church.*

Reader 2      Each one of us is part of a family,  
a child created by God, in God's own image and likeness.

All              *Let's look with fresh eyes*  
*- at our homes, at our community, at our church.*

Reader 3      Some of us were born in the last few years,  
some of us have been around for a while,  
some of us have been around even longer still.  
Each of us created by God and part of the family of God.

All              *Let's look with fresh eyes*  
*- at our homes, at our community, at our church.*

Reader 4      Each of us is a sister or a father,  
a cousin or a daughter,  
an aunt or a nephew,  
a grandmother, a great-grandson.  
Each of us created by God and part of the family of humanity.

All              *Let's look with fresh eyes*  
*- at our homes, at our community, at our church.*

Reader 5      Jesus created a family,  
a family of people who believed in his message.  
He said his family were those who heard his word  
and lived it out in their lives.  
Each of us is invited and called to be part of Jesus' family.

*All*            *Let's look with fresh eyes*  
*- at our homes, at our community, at our church.*

Reader 6      Each person you see is created by God,  
in God's own image and likeness.  
Whether we are old or young,  
single or married,  
in love or in pain,  
each of us is created by God and part of the family of God.

*All*            *Let's look with fresh eyes*  
*- at our homes, at our community, at our church.*  
*Thank you, God,*  
*for the people you have placed in our family and our community.*

Leader        Gathered as children of the one God, we say, *Our Father...*,

Leader        Transform us, Lord,  
transform us into disciples  
at our homes, at our community, at our church.  
eager to respond to your call  
and willing to welcome and include all people.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.  
Amen

# Prayer Resource 3

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## Praying for our Dead

*A candle is placed on a cloth in the centre of the meeting space....and around the cloth, there is a nightlight for each one present at the meeting.*

Leader            Christ promised to be with us always, even to the end of time.  
As we light this candle, we are reminded that he is with us here now:  
He is the light that shines in the darkness of pain and loss and bereavement  
and he is our hope in the face of death.

Candle is lit            Pause

Ever-loving God,  
you are always quick to see the pain of your people.

All            *Your son loved us so much that he gave his life for us on the cross:  
May our sisters and brothers, who have died,  
now know his love and peace.  
and share his victory over death.*

*Comfort all their families and friends  
and give them courage and hope.*

Reader 1        *Romans 8:31 -39*

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Leader I invite each one to light a nightlight, remembering your loved ones who have died....and entrusting them to the light of Christ

*After each one has lit their nightlight*

We bring our prayers to Jesus Christ, our brother

- For our family and friends who have died – Lord, hear us
- For all who have died tragically – Lord, hear us
- For those who died during the past year – Lord, hear us
- For all who fear death – Lord, hear us
- For all who are near death – Lord, hear us
- For all who need our support in their bereavement – Lord, hear us

*Invite people to name their own prayers.....*

*All Loving and forgiving God,  
we trust in your tender love for all.  
Comfort and strengthen those who mourn today.  
Renew their hope that they may live in peace.  
Renew their faith  
that they may entrust their dead  
to your Son, the Light of the World.  
We ask this in faith,  
through Jesus Christ, our brother and your Son.  
Amen*



# Prayer Resource 4

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## Beginning the New Year with a fresh attitude

*It might be helpful to place the candle on a cloth, and to put a diary or calendar beside it.*

Leader Startle us, Lord,  
with the beauty of creation.  
Let us see afresh  
the wonder of our world,  
the wonder of others,  
the wonder of ourselves.  
Startle us, Lord, again and again and again  
in this New Year.

Reader 1 *Excerpt from Pope Francis – Amoris Laetitia 138*

Develop the habit of giving real importance to the other person. This means appreciating them and recognising their right to exist, to think as they do and to be happy. Never downplay what they say or think, even if you need to express your own point of view. Everyone has something to contribute, because they have their life experiences, they look at things from a different standpoint and they have their own concerns, abilities and insights. We ought to be able to acknowledge the other person's truth, the value of his or her deepest concerns, and what it is that they are trying to communicate, however aggressively. We have to put ourselves in their shoes and try to peer into their hearts, to perceive their deepest concerns and to take them as a point of departure for further dialogue.

Leader We pause for a few moments, reflecting on this reading...and what each of us can personally learn from Pope Francis' attitude to other people....

Reader 3 As we strive to live our lives well.  
As we enjoy the treasures we've found in the field of faith.

All *Lord, may we accept the year ahead that you give us  
and trust that you will be with us*

Reader 4      As we continue to surrender ourselves to you  
As we journey into the unknown territory of a new year.

*All            Lord, may we receive each month as it comes – a gift from you.*

Reader 5      As we hurt in the process of loving our enemies  
As we learn to accept our weaknesses and our strengths

*All            Lord, may we be all you call us to be, day by day, minute by minute.*

*All            Lord, slow us down this year  
to notice you in our lives, in our communities and in our world.  
Help us to trust that your Spirit is at work in our world,  
ever inviting us to be your disciples of joy and truth.  
Jesus Christ, our brother,  
open our hearts to see others as you see all of humankind.  
Amen.*

# Prayer Resource 5

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## Lent: Opening our hearts to be transformed by God

*A purple cloth with a candle and a cross could be placed as a focus.*

Leader           As the mist tiptoes down over the hill, Lord,  
                    may your gentle touch tiptoe deep within us,  
                    treading softly  
                    through the hardened pathways of our hearts and lives,  
                    easing and opening us  
                    with the gentle touch of your grace.

Reader 1       *Hosea 2:14-16, 23*

Therefore, I will now allure her,  
and bring her into the wilderness,  
    and speak tenderly to her.  
From there I will give her vineyards,  
and make the Valley of Achor, a door of hope.  
There she shall respond as in the days of her youth,  
    as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.  
And I will have pity,  
    and I will say, "You are my people";  
and she shall say, "You are my God."

Leader           We pause at this stage of our Lenten journey to reflect on how God is seeking  
                    each of us out during these Lenten days...

Reader 2       *Some thoughts on Love – St. Teresa of Kolkata*

The words of Jesus, "Love one another as I have loved you", must be, not only a  
light to us, but a flame that consumes the selfishness in us. Do not imagine that  
love to be true must be extraordinary.... See how a lamp burns by the continual  
consumptions of little drops of oil. What are the little drops of oil in our lamps?

They are little things of everyday life: fidelity, little words of kindness, punctuality, just a little care for each other, those little acts of silence, of looks and thoughts, words and deeds, these are the very drops of love that will make our lives full of happiness.

*Pause*

Leader      God's love is a flame that consumes the selfishness in us  
- what does that mean for my life at this time?

*All*            *God of blooming deserts,  
encourage us to enter the space of this Lenten time,  
let us notice you seeking us out,  
and draw us into the desert of our own lives,  
where you alone can destroy our fears  
and give us passion and energy for the journey of life.  
We make this prayer through Christ your Son.  
Amen*

# Prayer Resource 6

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## Praying during the Easter season

*Place a red or yellow/green cloth with a candle in the centre of the group...enhance with a young plant.*

Leader            Unfurl us, Lord,  
                         unfurl all that has grown tight and taut in us  
                         unfurl our fears and clenched fists and panicked heart and gut,  
                         unfurl us with your tender presence,  
                         unfurl us, unfurl us, unfurl us.

*Reflection        A Psalm of New Wine Skins*

Reader 1         Comfortable and well-worn are my daily paths  
                         whose edges have grown grey with constant use.

Reader 2         My daily speech is a collection of old words  
                         worn down at the heels  
                         by repeated use.

Reader 3         My language and deeds, addicted to habit,  
                         prefer the taste of old wine, the feel of weathered skin.

Reader 1         Come and awaken me, Spirit of the new.

Reader 2         Come and refresh me, Creator of green life.

Reader 3         Come and inspire me, Risen Son,  
                         you who makes all things new: I am too young to be dead,  
                         to be stagnant in spirit.

Reader 4         High are the walls that guard the old,  
                         the tried and secure ways of yesterday  
                         that protect me from the dreaded plague,  
                         the feared heresy of change.  
                         For all change is a danger to the trusted order,  
                         the threadbare traditions that are maintained  
                         by the narrow ruts of rituals.

Yet how can an everlasting new covenant  
retain its freshness and vitality  
without injections of the new,  
the daring and the untried?

Reader 1      Come, O you who are ever-new,  
wrap my heart in new skin,

Reader 2      ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit.  
Set my feet to fresh paths this day:  
inspire me to speak original and life-giving words  
and to creatively give shape to the new.

Reader 3      Come and teach me how to dance with delight  
whenever you send a new melody my way.

*Adapted from Edward Hays*

Reader 4      *John 4:13-15*  
Jesus answered, Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever  
drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will  
become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' The woman said to  
him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming  
here to draw water.'

Leader      Irrigate our hearts and lives, Lord.  
Irrigate the dried up places of our lives,  
as once you promised a Samaritan woman  
a spring that would never dry up,  
and bring us to you, the living water.

All            Amen.

# Calendar

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## 2017

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### September

Friday 1st	World Day of Care for Creation Prayer Service 6.45pm Tralee Town Park
Saturday 9th	Corca Dhuibhne Course in Pastoral Ministry begins
Sunday 10th	National Grandparents' Day
Tuesday 12th	Time for Creation: Talk on Reducing Food Waste and Composting John Paul II Pastoral Centre, Killarney @ 8pm
Thursday 14th	Meeting of Diocesan Pastoral Council
Wednesday 20th	Tralee Pastoral Area Course in Pastoral Ministry begins
Wednesday 20th	Reflection Day for Clergy
Thursday 21st	Reflection Day for Clergy
Tuesday 26th	Course in Youth Ministry - St. John's Parish Centre
September 28th	Time for Creation: Cookery Demonstration with Mark Doe Our Lady and St. Brendan's Pastoral Centre, Tralee @ 8pm

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### October

Friday 13th	National Day of Prayer for Children
Sunday 15th	Diocesan Assembly: How can parish support family life?
Thursday 19th	Mission Event: "Reach Out and Spread the Joy"
Sunday 22nd	Mission Sunday

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### November

	Day for Parish Secretaries
Sunday 26th	Advent begins

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### December

Sunday 31st	Feast of the Holy Family
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# 2018

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## January

Tuesday 9th                      Public talk: Dr Patricia Kieran on Exploring Family Life  
Monday 29th                      Catholic Schools' Week

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## February

Wednesday 14th                      Ash Wednesday  
Lenten Programme

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## March

Trócaire Lenten resources

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## April

Visit of Holy Family Icon to the Pastoral Areas  
Days of Prayer, Gift of Family

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## May

Sunday 13th                      World Communications' Day  
Certificate Nights for Diocesan Courses in Pastoral Ministry

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## June

State Examinations  
Cemetery Masses

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## July

Youth Pilgrimage to Taizé

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## August

Tuesday 21st                      World Meeting of Families  
- Saturday 25th  
Sunday 26th                      World Meeting of Families: Closing Mass with Pope Francis



## Diocesan Prayer

Loving God,  
Creator of the universe,  
you have made all things good  
and given us the earth as our home.

You call each of us by name,  
to proclaim the Good News of your Son, Jesus Christ  
through witness, worship and service.

May your Spirit guide us  
as a welcoming and compassionate community;  
responding to the needs of those most vulnerable;  
and sharing our gifts for the good of all people to the glory of God.  
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## Paidir na Deoise

*A Dhia Ghrámhair, Cruthaitheoir na Cruinne,  
dheinis an uile rud maith agus thugais an domhan dúinn mar ár mbaile.  
Ghlaois ar gach duine againn ina ainm  
le Dea-Scéal do Mhic Íosa Críost a fhógairt trí fhianaise, trí adhradh agus trí sheirbhís.*

*Go dtreoraí do Spiorad sinn mar chumann fáilteach truachroíoch  
ag freagairt dá nglao siúd is soghonta;  
ag dáileadh ár dtabhartas ar mhaithe le gach duine chun glóir Dé.  
Sin é ár nguí chugat trí Chríost ár dTiarna.  
Amen*



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# Diocesan Assembly 2017



## How parish can support family life?

In preparation for the World Meeting of Families 2018, this assembly will provide an opportunity for those involved in parish pastoral councils to explore ways and means of supporting family life.

### Who?

All members of Parish Pastoral Councils

### When?

Sunday Oct 15th

### Where?

The Brandon Hotel, Tralee.

