

# Our Future Church

The synodal journey of the Council of Priests, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the various Diocesan offices and programmes, and the People of God within parishes and deaneries across the Diocese of Ferns has led to many fruitful conversations about our mission and hopes for the future.

This communal discernment with the help of the Holy Spirit has led us to a shared plan for **'Our Future Church'**, which recognises the gifts of the clergy, religious and laity to inspire faith and build hope in our parish communities; hopes for loving God and neighbour, for living our faith, for gathering together, for teamwork, for families and young people, for lay leadership, for learning together, for reaching out to the vulnerable, for mission, and for vocations to lay and ordained ministry. This plan will also help children and families prepare for the Sacraments; support families and loved ones in times of illness and bereavement; encourage prayer in our communities; and help sustain parishes.

As we continue to enrich this vital mission, we are building upon the solid foundation of faith which we have inherited. **'Our Future Church'** is presented here as eight themes, a grouping of parishes into 12 pastoral areas, a pastoral area map and a profile of a future parish to guide us with God's help in transforming our shared hopes into reality.

In the peace and friendship of Jesus, Bishop Ger Nash

## THE EIGHT THEMES OF 'OUR FUTURE CHURCH' (2024 – 2030)

### Love & Serve

*Reaching out to others and to all God's creation in love*

### Listen & Follow

*Letting our faith in God bring joy to our shared missionary lives*

### Welcome & Include

*Fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion*

### Hope & Communicate

*Sharing the hope, meaning and joy of the resurrected Christ*



### Pray & Journey

*Praying personally and with others on the path of faith*

### Form & Lead

*Supporting life-long learning, teamwork and leadership in ministry and mission*

### Worship & Witness

*Nourishing our spiritual growth to lead others to Christ*

### Empower & Flourish

*Working with others to strengthen parishes and the Diocesan family*

## THE GROUPING OF PARISHES IN OUR TWELVE PASTORAL AREAS

A Pastoral Area is a grouping of parishes and their curacies, which can increasingly work together in deeper and more intentional ways to support mission. This collaboration can involve the sharing of vital resources, such as priests, deacons and lay leaders across parish boundaries.

<b>9 churches</b>	<b>7 churches</b>	<b>8 churches</b>
<i>Annacurragh Killaveney Kilanierin Carnew</i>	<i>Ferns Kilrush Bunclody</i>	<i>Gorey Camolin Riverchapel Craanford</i>
<b>12 churches</b>	<b>8 churches</b>	<b>4 churches</b>
<i>Ballindaggin Rathnure Cloughbawn Davidstown Bree</i>	<i>Monageer Oulart Ballygarrett Kilmuckridge Blackwater</i>	<i>Marshallstown St. Aidan's St. Senan's</i>
<b>9 churches</b>	<b>7 churches</b>	<b>9 churches</b>
<i>Horeswood Ramsgrange Duncannon Templetown Ballycullane</i>	<i>New Ross Cushinstown Adamstown Newbawn</i>	<i>Clongeen Bannow Taghmon Rathangan</i>
<b>7 churches</b>	<b>12 churches</b>	<b>7 churches</b>
<i>Glynn Clonard Wexford Piercestown</i>	<i>Tagoat Kilrane &amp; St. Patrick's Our Lady's Island Ballymore Kilmore</i>	<i>Castlebridge Crossabeg Oilgate</i>

**'For we are God's servants, working together;  
you are God's field, God's building.'**

**1 Corinthians 3:9**



# A PROFILE OF A FUTURE PARISH

## Finance Committee

Takes responsibility for the finance of the local parish or curacy with the mission of developing the faith community.

## Pastoral Area

3 – 6 parishes per pastoral area  
Shared priests work in a team with trained & commissioned lay ministers.

## Lay-led Liturgy

A small group leads the liturgy in each church in the absence of a priest. A group meets regularly to pray with Scripture.

## Pastoral Council

Promotes teamwork & mission; A representative of the Parish Pastoral Council sits on Area Pastoral Council, which meets 4 times per year.



## Meetings

Regular meetings of lay & ordained ministers for co-ordination & fellowship.

## Mass Rota

The Mass rota across the pastoral area is organised so that less priests can celebrate all the Masses as the need arises.

In the years ahead, possibilities for collaboration within pastoral areas include:

- Joint preparation of the sacraments of initiation (baptism, first communion and confirmation) for children and adults within each parish and a shared programme of adult education, formation and pastoral development within pastoral areas.
- Coordinating sustainable Mass schedules, themes of Masses and liturgical events.
- A coordinated response to the needs of the vulnerable and care for the earth, through a network of parish-based social action groups and charities.
- A collaborative youth and family ministry, which organizes events and activities for young people and families, such as retreats, pilgrimages and service projects guided by **The Way Forward**, a Diocesan initiative, which opens the door for young people to the possibility of Jesus in their lives. This ongoing plan builds upon a framework of parish-based Diocesan Faith Representatives within pastoral areas and develops new faith-based initiatives that link schools, parishes and home.
- A joint newsletter or online presence, which communicates news and information about the pastoral area and its parishes to each community within the area.
- The establishment of a Pastoral Area Office which co-ordinates requests for Masses, Administration, the tasks of Financial Reporting, Safeguarding, Training, GDPR and other administrative issues.