

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018

Dear Father,

First of all, I want to thank the priests of the diocese and the religious working in the diocese for the manner in which you animated the memorable days of the World Meeting of Families. It was inspiring to see how Parishes united around their priests. I was especially struck by the presence of so many families with their children at the events.

The gathering in the Pro-Cathedral of young couples preparing for or who had recently celebrated the sacrament of matrimony was remarkable. It was a unique sign of a future of faith, of goodness and of love. This was a unique vision of a Church for the future, as these young couples reflected on the Pope's vision of lifelong commitment and on the beauty of passing on faith in Jesus Christ to the next generation.

The question now arises: where do we go forward now in the challenge of renewing the faith we carry in our own hearts and renewing the life of the Church?

Speaking in the Pro-Cathedral [yesterday](#), I suggested that every parish or community might find concrete ways of reflecting on this challenge. I would ask parishes to do this in the weeks around the Feast of Saint Laurence O'Toole, Principal Patron of the Diocese, on the 14<sup>th</sup> November. It is not a question of a political style consultation, but a call to each believer and faith community radically to interiorise what the challenge of faith in Jesus entails.

Each parish and parish community can find its own path of reflection, with the help of the Parish Pastoral Council. The aim is not to provide instant answers but at least to begin to set out a realistic agenda for renewal of the Church in the years to come.

Some would prefer me to give a more detailed outline of what I expect. I would prefer to let each parish come up with its own vision. I would like to gather a wide variety of ideas and not simply repeat the ideas of one or another group.

For me the questions that should be addressed are the deeper questions about faith in Jesus Christ. Why are we no longer captivating so many of our young people for the message of Jesus Christ? Which models of pastoral activity and reflection are most likely to win the hearts of young people for the message of Jesus? How do we teach young people about prayer? How can our parishes respond to these challenges? Which aspects of our dominant culture make it harder for people to understand the message of Jesus? I am thinking, for example, about a widespread individualism that invades everything from personal life to our economic vision.

I ask you to work with your Parish Pastoral Council to organise some form of parish assembly to discuss the future. You can then forward a short report of your findings to me directly. Once the reports have been analysed we will look at what processes we can adopt to move forward.

At the RDS Pastoral Congress, the enthusiasm of priests and people celebrating together was tangible. I hope that we can keep that positive atmosphere alive and build on those renewed relationships.

With renewed thanks for your ministry and with prayerful good wishes, I remain,

+Diarmuid Martin  
Archbishop of Dublin