**Parish Partnerships “Building Hope” Archdiocese of Dublin**

**Briefing Notes of Fr Kieran McDermott, Adm., VF**

11/12 March 2023 - All Weekend Masses

**Building Hope – An Invitation**

Archbishop Farrell, shortly after his installation as Archbishop announce a new pastoral initiative entitled ‘Building Hope’.

Following an open invitation to all just over 3,000 people responded with their ideas, observation and suggestions.

**Synodal Pathway**

Shortly afterwards, the Archdiocese in tandem with the rest of the universal Church embarked on the Synodal Pathway. I was privileged to lead the project in Dublin. 13,000 people together with a variety of 23 Focus Groups took part expressing their joys, hopes, fears and anxieties.

"Throughout the submissions, we heard calls that lay people, should be involved in more significant leadership and teaching roles … not just because it will take some burden off the priest, but because it is part of each person’s mission as a baptised Catholic." *National & Diocesan Synodal Synthesis*

**Changing Contexts**

Some context might be helpful here: The last published statistics following the 2016 Census confirms that the area between the Canals has undergone something of a seismic change with 50% of the population living between the canals not born in Ireland. Of that 50% less than 49% identify as Christian.

In October this year, the Government has announced that it will publish in the autumn the statistics for faith practice in Ireland from the national Census held last year. The information furnished will likely give further food for thought. So, this part of the city has changed dramatically and changed in a relatively short period and continues to do so.

The question therefore arises: what will be the future for belief in the city? What will be the future for parishes and its churches? How can the faith communities reach out beyond the doors especially to the disadvantaged, the poor and those who feel a distance from faith or disaffected?

Following consultation, what has emerged is an invitation to participate in ‘Parishes in Partnership’ working together, women and men, lay and ordained.

Under the new Parish Partnerships, the Pro-Cathedral is now partnered with 3 other parishes locally: Sean McDermott Street (under the pastoral care of the Salesians). St Joseph’s Berkley Road, diocesan and Gardiner Street (under the pastoral care of the Irish Jesuits). So, four parishes instead of one will working together. Shortly, a new Parish Pastoral Council will be established here in the Cathedral and they will assist in establishing a Partnership Pastoral Council of the 4 parishes in the partnership.

But there are also signs of new life of hope! Every Sunday evening here at the Cathedral at the 6 pm Mass the SHALOM community animate a liturgy for young adults. Since its inauguration a year ago it is growing with participation of many young adults in their 20s and 30s people, mainly the ‘new Irish’.

The Building Hope process is one founded on the principle of co-responsibility – priests and people working together, each in their role, and guided by the Holy Spirit, bringing their skills and talents to bear. The Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin is readying herself to embrace a new way of being Church at the service of the mission handed on, and forever new."

“The goal of pastoral renewal in the Archdiocese and parishes together is to build up:

* communities that are faith filled,
* communities of co-responsibility through servant leadership,
* communities that are active in social justice and
* communities of welcome and inclusion.

Lay ministry roles are crucial for the road ahead. There is no other way. Indeed, there is more: our faith tells us that this is the way God is calling the Church to follow Christ today.” It will be the task of the new Partnership Pastoral Council working with people locally to make this a reality.