



# Synod Feedback Report

During the month of March, we were asked to respond to Pope Francis and join a synodal process with the Holy Father. The Pope invited us all to take part in sharing and listening to each other and to the Spirit by giving some thought to four questions.

1. When you think of your experience of Church, what brings **joy**?
2. When you think of your experience of Church, what brings **sadness or disappointment**?
3. When you think of your experience of Church, what brings **hope**?
4. When you think of your experience of Church, what brings **fear or anxiety**?

He reminded us that we are all in the same boat seeking the truth and with the help of the Holy Spirit he asked us all to help guide the Church through a period of change.

Over two weekends in March these questions were shared with congregations at all masses. In addition to this views were also sought from individuals and groups who might not be regular attendees at mass.

We are grateful to all who took the time to consider these questions and give their views. Over 500 responses were received. These views were collated during the month of April and a report identifying emerging themes was submitted to the Archdiocese.

Set out below are the themes which emerged:

## Joy

- Attending mass, participating in the Eucharist and receiving the sacraments
- A sense of belonging to a community of faith
- The Church as a place of sanctity and prayer - a safe refuge
- Good priests and their ministry

## Sadness

- The various scandals have dealt a shock to the faithful in terms of confidence in the institution
- Society has changed - the Church hasn't and is out of touch
- Failure of the Church to communicate it's positive message
- The falling away of young people and middle generation families from the Church
- The deafness of the Church to social issues
- The decline in vocations to the priesthood
- The role of women in our Church

## Hope

- There is great hope in the leadership of Pope Francis
- There is a need for new forms of prayer and more involvement of the laity
- That the Church will listen to the outcomes from this Synodal process
- That vocations to religious life and lay ministry will recover and grow

- That there is an openness in the Church to minorities
- That the role of women in ministry will be promoted
- That young people and families return and want to be part of a faith community and to the Church which is open to all
- That the Church is more active in countering the negative portrayal of the institution in the mainstream media

### Fears

- That young people will find the Church irrelevant in their lives
- That the voice of the people will not be heard by the Church
- That Pope Francis won't be able to bring the Church leadership along with him
- That only ultra-orthodox clergy will be elevated to high office in the Church.

A huge thank you to all who took the time to communicate their answers and views to the questions asked by Pope Francis. It is clear that people are concerned for their Church and want it to adapt to the times we live in while remaining true to the message of Jesus.

We were also asked following the Synodal listening exercise, to discern ***what might the Holy Spirit be indicating in this?*** Following a period of reflection and discernment, the following emerged:

- That the people are heard by the Church.
- That as a Church we support the old while bringing along the young.
- That the Church is a gathering space where all are welcome irrespective of life choices
- That the Church shouldn't be complacent to what is being said in this Synodal process.
- That the scandals have been a setback for the Church as it appeared not to be following the teachings of Jesus.
- That the Church needs to be brave and trust in the Holy Spirit
- That the faithful need to be less passive and more active in practicing their faith.
- And finally change is needed if we are to grow as a faith community.

The Greystones and Kilquade Pastoral Council will be spending some time in the coming months reviewing these responses and planning how as a pastoral area we can respond and grow our faith community.

***The overall message from the Synodal process is very clear -  
the church must introduce meaningful change to continue its mission of faith.***



Parishes of  
Greystones  
& Kilquade



Our next step is to accept and act on the invitation from Archbishop Dermot Farrell as presented in his Living the Hope of Easter: Pastoral Letter.

Next weekend, on the feast of Pentecost, we will hear more about the diocesan Building Hope Project.

*“It is time now for the whole diocesan family to travel further, by addressing the specific challenges we face as a diocese. The Building Hope Task Force in its Report proposed a strategy by which we can be renewed for the mission which Christ has entrusted to us all.”*

*“I am therefore inviting each parish community, as part of our Building Hope strategy, to begin to reflect on how best to respond to the pastoral situation in which we find ourselves. It is very clear that the future will not look like the past. Our world has changed: we cannot return to the past. God is bringing forth something new (see Isaiah 43:19). Our challenge – and it is ours – rather than simply reacting to events, is to shape the future in the light of the gospel. “*

***Living the Hope of Easter: Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Pastoral Letter, Easter 2022***

# **The *Building Hope* Prayer**

Pilgrim God, we give you thanks and praise.

You constantly journey with us  
even in our darkness and doubts.

We seek your way of loving kindness  
to walk together as one family.

Open our eyes to recognise you  
in the faces of one another,  
in the breaking of bread  
and in the splendour of creation.

May the risen Christ sow seeds of hope  
and new life deep within us.

May our hearts and minds be filled with your Word,  
bringing forth truth, justice and peace.

May the Holy Spirit working in  
and through us do much more  
than we can dare to imagine  
as we live out our baptismal calling  
in humble and loving service.

We make this our prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

St Laurence O'Toole, pray for us.

St Kevin, pray for us.

St Brigid, pray for us.

*Building Hope*