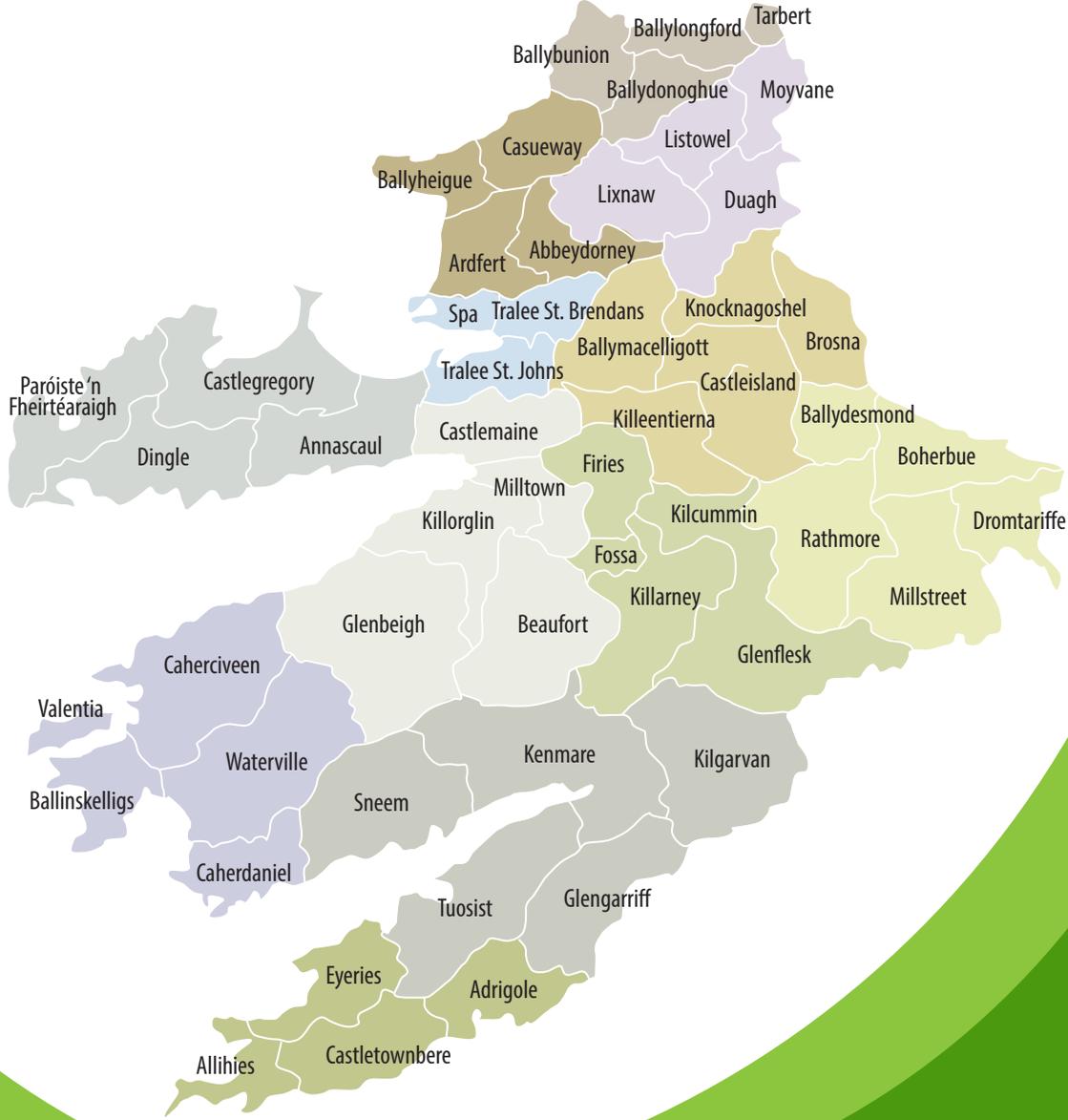




Diocese of Kerry **Pastoral Plan 2016-2020**

# Parishes and Pastoral Areas in the Diocese of Kerry





## Summary

This document is a Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Kerry for the next five years, 2016-2020. It describes our priorities and what we need to do in order to witness to Jesus Christ and reflect the hope of the Gospel in today's world.

This Pastoral Plan is a response to the hopes, concerns and issues expressed by people. It builds on an effective parish, pastoral area and diocesan infrastructure; increased appetite for ongoing training; and the commitment of clergy and people evident in the parishes throughout our diocese.

Our parishes are alive and deeply relevant in 21st century Ireland. The challenge now is to proclaim the joy of the Gospel in a way that touches peoples' hearts and lives in these ever-changing times.

To achieve this, we will focus on three goals for the coming five years:

- **Develop welcoming, faith filled communities relevant to the age we live in;**
- **Enable people to deepen their faith and proclaim the Good News of Jesus;**
- **Be a catalyst for compassion and justice;**

## 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



## Message from Bishop Ray



*Is le lúcháir agus dóchas a sheolaim an plean tréadach nua do Dheoise Chiarraí. My arrival as Bishop of Kerry in 2013 coincided with the final months of the last Pastoral Plan. During my first two years, the new plan completed the life-cycle from the seed sown to the fully developed plan that we now all rejoice in. Then I had no knowledge of the living faith, hope and love of the people of our diocese. Today so much is familiar to me and so much is encouraging. So much evolved in the diocese over the past twenty years guided by Bishop Murphy and further progress has been made in the past five years.*

*I express my deep appreciation of all, laity, religious and clergy, at diocesan and parish level, who have given great service over the years. Thanks especially to all who have contributed to the formulation of this Pastoral Plan. These are challenging times and our parishes are rising to the challenge. Our new Pastoral Plan covers all aspects of Christian life. One thing I ask is that we all respect and promote Sunday as the Lord's Day: a day of rest; a day to turn to God in prayer; and a day to gather to celebrate Mass together. Sunday is at the heart of Christian living.*

*Three important Church events of recent times might guide us as we look to the next five years: Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si*, on the world's environment and its people can be summed up in two simple phrases: 'Care for our common home' and 'Hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'. The earth is one big home; care for it as you care for your own home. All people make up one family; be concerned for them as your sisters and brothers. God bless all the people of so many nationalities who have made our diocese their home.*

*The Synod of Bishops met on the theme of 'The Family'. In our world, so modern and so technological, we are reminded everywhere that 'family' is fundamental. Respect all families; work for a society that is supportive of all family life; commit whole-heartedly to your own family; rejoice whenever you are in a position to help a family in need.*

*We have a new Primary Religious Education programme *Grow in Love*. The first page of the Pupil's Book for Junior Infants states, "Dear families . . . with the support of the teachers in your school and of your parish community, we hope that this textbook can help you to journey with your child as they 'grow in love' with God and with one another." What a sacred responsibility, what a sacred privilege, what a sacred challenge for families, for parish schools and communities.*

*Our Pastoral Plan is a call to us all to 'Be Christ's Joy'. May Our Lady intercede for us, she who proclaimed, "My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour."*

*Bishop Ray Browne  
Feast of All Saints 2015*



# Introduction

The Diocesan Pastoral Council identified the need to develop a new pastoral plan in 2013. A working group was tasked with reviewing the previous pastoral plan, carrying out a listening exercise, identifying priorities and drawing up a new pastoral plan. The pastoral planning group was assisted in its work by Martin Kennedy, Maureen Kelly, Fr. Seán O'Sullivan and Fr. Eugene Duffy. The review of the 2009-2013 Pastoral Plan involved consultation with Area Pastoral Councils, Ministry Groups and the Pastoral Team. A report was presented to the Diocesan Pastoral Council on April 29th 2014.

Over two thousand people participated in a listening process, November 2014 - March 2015. It involved consultation with clergy, public meetings in each pastoral area, gatherings with focus groups and an open invitation for submissions. Participants were asked to comment on the issues affecting their everyday lives and their hopes for the diocese over the next 5 years.

Following a critique of the findings three goals were identified:

- **Develop welcoming, faith filled communities relevant to the age we live in;**
- **Enable people to deepen their faith and proclaim the Good News of Jesus;**
- **Be a catalyst for compassion and justice;**

The development of this pastoral plan has been a process of prayer, reflection and discernment, informed and shaped by recent Church documents, *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato Si* and *Share the Good News*. By reflecting on the present reality of people's experience and conscious of the reduced number of clergy ministering in the diocese, needs were identified and a pastoral plan for the future, inspired by Gospel values, has been formulated. The actions named explicitly address the issues and concerns raised at the listening gatherings. It is hoped that it will provide a clear focus for the work of the diocese over the coming years and will keep all of us, laity, religious and clergy, engaged, responsible and accountable for living the Gospel in our parishes, our pastoral areas and our diocese.

The Pastoral Plan outlines actions for achieving the priorities. Yearly work plans detailing specific activities will be drawn up, along with an annual resource book prepared for Pastoral Councils. Regular updates on the implementation of the Pastoral Plan will be available on the diocesan website. Each year the Diocesan Pastoral Council will carry out a review of the implementation of the Pastoral Plan.



# Called to be Christ's joy!

*"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full"* (Jn 10:10). In those words Jesus assured his disciples, and us as well, that this is God's deepest desire for all people: that they might have the fullness of life. In the course of his own life Jesus showed us how that fullness of life begins to take shape here and now. It is not a distant promise; it can be experienced here on earth and it will reach its completion when we see God face to face.

During his public life Jesus showed and spoke about the extent of God's love and compassion for all people. His heart went out to those who were in any kind of distress, whether burdened by poverty, anxiety, illness or sin. He had a profound respect for all whom he encountered and he enabled them to discover the goodness and joy that our loving God had planted deep within them. He showed that gentleness, generosity, patience, humility, compassion and service towards others brought about one's deepest peace and joy. It was with those qualities that he gave his life for us – he did not resort to a show of power or violence to avoid his crucifixion. Rather, he gave himself up willingly out of a desire to reveal the extent of God's love for all people. God raised him up, gave him new life and power through his resurrection, so that he can now be present to us in the life of his Spirit.

Before he left us, Jesus formed a group of followers, his disciples, in the way of life he himself had lived. After his resurrection he poured out his Spirit on them so that they could continue to make that vision of life a reality in the world for all time. Today, we are part of that community. Gifted by the Spirit through baptism and confirmation, and nourished by the Eucharist, we can fulfil this design that God has for us, to be living signs of his love in our world.

As local communities of disciples in the Diocese of Kerry, this Pastoral Plan is a support for us to live the life of service to which Jesus is calling us. In this service we will discover our deepest joy. Each of us has gifts which we are called to share with others and it is in sharing what we have that we will find that fullness of life which God so deeply desires for us.

## Our Purpose *Ár nAidhm*

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

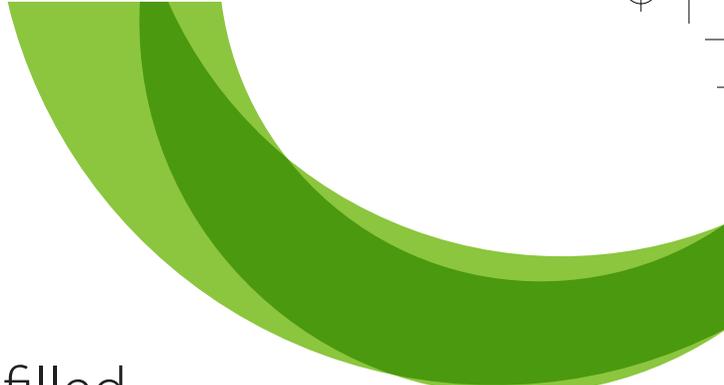
*Fógair dea-scéala an Tiarna Íosa Críost le lúcháir,  
trí fhianaise, trí adhradh agus trí sheirbhís.*

## Our Vision *Ár bhfís*

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 truachróich  
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  
*Comhluidair fháilteacha lánchreidmheacha sáite sa saol ina mairimid a chur chun cinn*

*Over the past number of years, priests and people have worked hard to develop Pastoral Councils, Liturgy Committees, Finance Councils, Safeguarding Children Committees and School Boards of Management in each parish. Sharing resources and working together as parishes within a pastoral area has been coordinated by Area Pastoral Councils. Lay ministry has progressed through new opportunities and training programmes. There are two permanent deacons now ministering in the diocese. ACCORD and CURA support people at particular moments of their lives. Many people are nurtured in their witness to the Gospel by various groups e.g. Legion of Mary. Committed clergy are responding and ministering to people in the ever-changing face of parish life.*

*Effective structures are essential, but they are not the whole picture. Our role now is to foster local church communities, building on what is already established. Over the coming years, we wish to progress in becoming communities of Christian hope, compassion and welcome.*

### Actions

- Resource families and parish communities to hand on faith to children;
  - Promote ways of communicating that all in the parish are welcome to participate and be involved;
  - Identify specific occasions to build community and welcome for parishioners during the year;
  - Value the voice of women in planning and decision-making at local and diocesan level in our Church;
  - Ensure social and gender balance on all parish and diocesan committees;
  - Progress the development of funeral teams, baptism teams and lay ministry;
  - Support local church communities to provide opportunities for prayer and worship;
  - Foster faith communities in which a sense of vocation is nurtured;
  - Develop accessible and hospitable parish facilities;
  - Appraise and renew all parish committees and ministries;
  - Deepen relationships with other Christian and faith communities;
  - Promote the highest standards of Safeguarding Children at all levels in the diocese;
  - Recognise and promote the use of Irish;
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## Goal 2

Enable people to deepen their faith and proclaim the Good News of Jesus

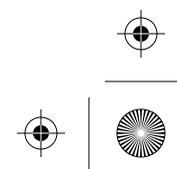
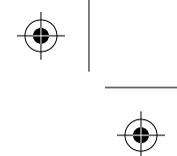
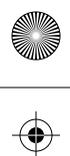
*É a chur ar a gcumas do dhaoine a gcreideamh a dhoimhniú agus Dea-Scéal Íosa a fhógairt*

*Faith development in the diocese takes many guises. Teachers and chaplains, supported by diocesan advisors, are working with children. Parish ministers are offered training and reflection evenings. Many people participate in pastoral and youth ministry programmes. Young people in the diocese are supported by KDYS, IT Tralee chaplaincy, school and parish youth initiatives. People's faith is enriched by Ardfert Retreat Centre, parish missions, novenas, Eucharistic Adoration, Padre Pio and other prayer groups.*

*At the heart of our work over the coming years will be enabling people to deepen their experience of being followers and disciples of Jesus Christ. This will allow all to fulfil their baptismal calling to proclaim the Gospel, in word and deed.*

### Actions

- Resource greater understanding and celebration of Eucharist;
- Resource families, parishes and primary schools to implement the Grow in Love programme;
- Foster initiatives to support the faith and spiritual development of adults;
- Offer opportunities for clergy to be enriched and supported for ministry today;
- Utilise popular ritual moments to reach out and share the Good News;
- Progress diocesan initiatives to support the social, personal and faith development of young people;
- Provide opportunities for Pastoral Councils to develop pastoral leadership skills;
- Utilise contemporary means of communication to share the Good News of Jesus Christ;



## Goal 3

### Be a catalyst for compassion and justice

#### *Bí ag griogadh le trócaire agus cóir a chur chun cinn*

*In the Gospels, Jesus teaches us that what we do to others, we do to him. Pope Francis champions the command to care for our sisters and brothers as a sign of Christian love. We are challenged to be prophets for our time and to reach out with compassion and understanding to those who are hurting.*

*Many people today suffer from exclusion, poverty and injustice. Organisations such as Trócaire, World Mission Ireland, St. Vincent De Paul and the Diocesan Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation work on behalf of the church community to reach out to those in need. Pope Francis' recent encyclical, Laudato Si, reminds us of how interdependent all of creation is. Over the coming years, we wish to grow in our understanding of the role of Catholic Social Teaching at the heart of our faith. This will deepen our ability to work with and for those who are marginalised and wounded in today's society.*

### Actions

- Respond to immediate needs and crises in an enabling and empowering way;
- Examine the present reality of poverty, isolation and exclusion in order to respond appropriately;
- Create awareness of the role and responsibility of the Church in relation to justice;
- Contribute to the dialogue regarding the development of social policy;
- Facilitate the participation of the marginalised in decision-making;
- Respect distinct cultures through the development of appropriate pastoral responses;
- Work in solidarity with agencies committed to social justice;
- Justice-proof the use of diocesan and parish resources;
- Identify actions to promote care for the earth;



## By implementing this plan, we will see:

- Laity, religious and clergy sharing their gifts;
- Welcoming and caring parishes;
- Parents competent and enthused in handing on their faith to their children;
- Parishes supporting and nurturing families;
- Young people's presence appreciated and respected;
- Women experiencing respect, inclusion and equality;
- Parishes discerning how best to assemble and to pray as a community;
- Priests offered sabbatical opportunities;
- People aware of the connection between faith and justice;
- Parishes reaching out compassionately;
- Empowerment as the mark of our relationships;
- Diocesan and parish activities reflecting responsibility for the care of creation;
- Diocese advocating for the marginalised;
- Diocese collaborating with other organisations working for justice.





[www.dioceseofkerry.ie](http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie)

