



**DIOCESE** of  
**DERRY**

# GOD IS LOVE

**DERRY DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN  
2018-2021**

## CONTENTS

# DERRY DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN | 2018-2021

### INTRODUCTION

Reflecting, Learning & Refocusing	1
-----------------------------------	---

---

### PASTORAL THEMES

1.0 Build Welcoming and Inclusive Communities	3
2.0 Be Disciples of Jesus Christ, Growing in Faith Together	5
3.0 Work to Make Jesus Known and Loved	7

---

### DIOCESAN SUPPORT

Pastoral Planning Resources	8
Reference Resources	9

---



**GOD DOES NOT LOVE US BECAUSE THERE IS SOME REASON THAT CAUSES LOVE. GOD LOVES US BECAUSE HE HIMSELF IS LOVE, AND LOVE TENDS TO SPREAD AND GIVE BY ITS NATURE."**

**CATHOLIC NEWS AGENCY VATICAN CITY - 14 JUNE 2017**

# INTRODUCTION BY BISHOP DONAL McKEOWN

## REFLECTING, LEARNING & REFOCUSING

**Jesus calls each one of us to love God and love one another - no matter what. For every one of us who try to follow Christ's teaching, it is the most difficult challenge we face.**

To even try to love God and love one another would be impossible without opening our hearts to God's unconditional love for us. God pours out his love for each one of us when the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ through the holy sacrifice of the Mass. When we receive holy communion prayerfully and with love, Jesus offers us the grace we need to live out his teaching in our day-to-day lives.

'God is Love' - the Derry Diocesan Plan 2018-2021 asks us to take responsibility both individually and collectively, for making our parishes places of welcome; where those who feel excluded or far from the Church's love, can begin to feel the genuine love and warmth of our parish communities. As disciples of Christ we must prayerfully seek the grace to reach out in love to all, and by doing this - even imperfectly, we CAN make Jesus known and loved.

The Plan sets out the path that we hope to take in every parish community over the course of the next three years. Three pastoral themes will help focus our energies, personnel and resources:

- **Build Welcoming and Inclusive Communities**
- **Be Disciples of Jesus Christ, Growing in Faith Together**
- **Work to Make Jesus Known and Loved**

Implementing the Plan will involve major refocusing of what we do in our parishes. Dedicated resources and personnel will be established at diocesan level to support parishes to fully implement the Plan. Training and formation for those who will have leadership roles in each parish will be provided. As each parish community develops its own capability, it can begin to take responsibility for its pastoral priorities and take the first steps to address those priorities - whether using their own resources or working cooperatively with neighbouring parishes.

The need for the Plan was recognised in 2016 when I met with the Council of Priests to discuss the current and future needs of the Diocese. The task of developing the Plan was given to an Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council made up of 14 men, women, clergy, religious and laity. I have journeyed with the Council members for two years as they prayerfully reflected on the needs of the Diocese and sought solutions to the many challenges we face. I am immensely grateful for their energy, dedication and honesty. The Plan is a first step in developing a co-responsible Church at parish and diocesan level.

As we move forward, I take comfort in your prayers and support - as I believe that everything done in faith and love will bear fruit in God's own good time.

† Donal McKeown  
Bishop of Derry





**POPE FRANCIS SAID IT IS POSSIBLE TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOUR IN THE UNCONDITIONAL WAY THAT JESUS INTENDED, "IF IT IS BASED ON TRUE LOVE FOR GOD." THE LOVE WE GIVE TO OUR NEIGHBOUR COMES FROM GOD; "THROUGH PRAYER, BY LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD AND FROM THE NOURISHMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST."**

**VATICAN PRESS - 25 SEPTEMBER 2017**

## PASTORAL THEME 1.0

# BUILD WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

**WE MUST STRIVE TO BUILD PARISHES THAT ARE PLACES OF WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY TO ALL, REACHING OUT IN PARTICULAR TO THE VULNERABLE, THOSE IN NEED AND THOSE WHO FEEL EXCLUDED.**

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**1.1 Consult and involve parishioners in decision making**

**1.2 Increase the number of people participating in the sacraments and encourage more people to play an active role in the life of the parish**

**1.3 Be proactive in living our faith and reaching out to those who feel excluded**

### PARISH TASKS

1.1.1 Put structures in place to discuss and plan parish pastoral priorities.

**To be completed by December 2018**

1.1.2 Use print and online resources developed by the diocese to invite parishioners to take part in a parish survey. The invitation to take part should be characterised by humility, openness and sincerity, as it may be the first contact of any kind between parish representatives and the great majority of those invited to take part.

**To be completed by April 2019**

1.2.1 Use the results of the parish survey to reshape parish activities and build community.

**To be completed by July 2019**

1.2.2 Implement reshaped parish activities and carry out planned activities to build community.

**Ongoing from July 2019**

1.2.3 Appoint a youth activities coordinator with a role to outreach to young people.

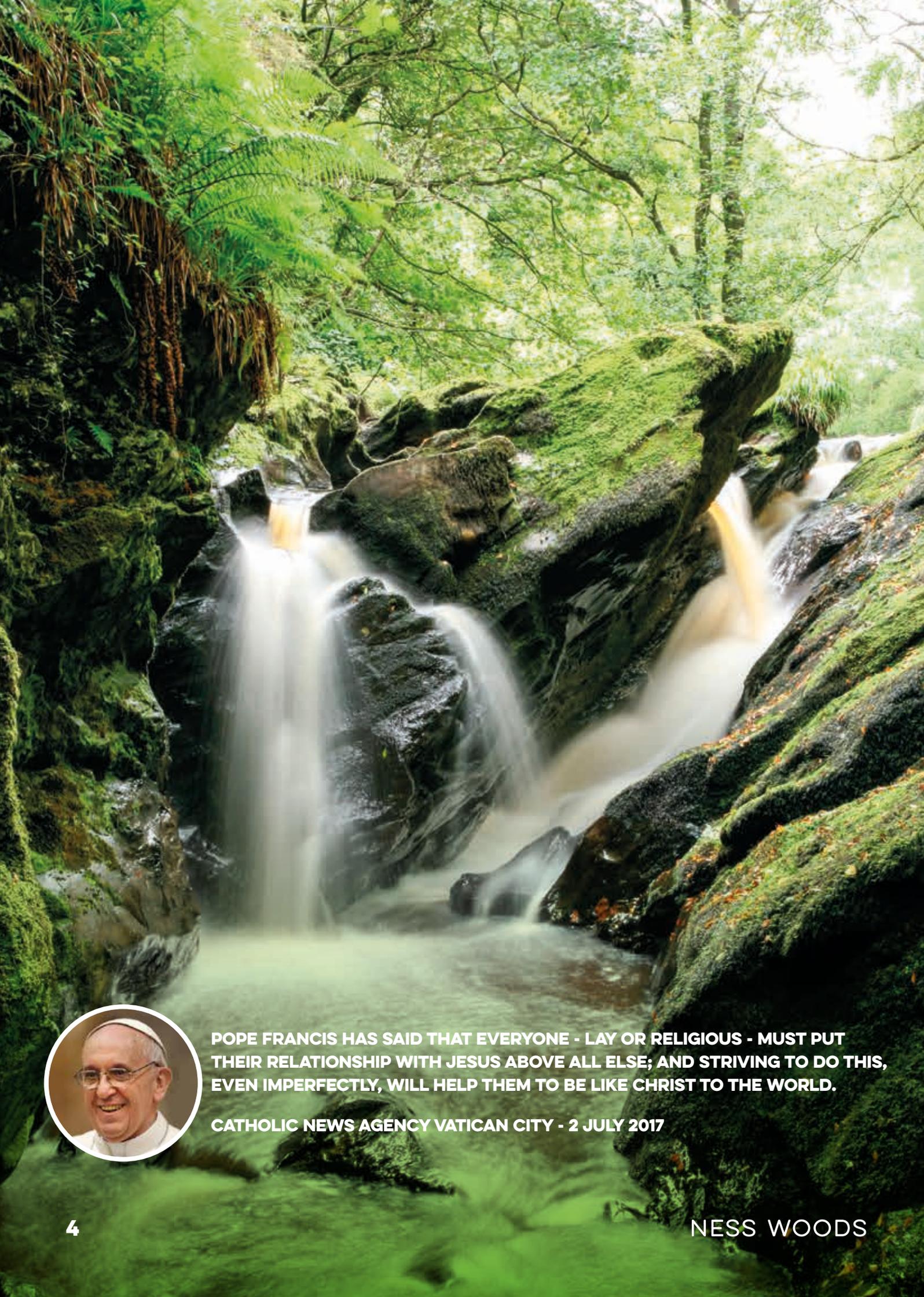
**To be completed by July 2019**

1.3.1 Use the results of the parish survey to plan ways to reach out to those who feel excluded.

**To be completed by July 2019**

1.3.2 Carry out planned activities to reach out to those who feel excluded.

**Ongoing from July 2019**



**POPE FRANCIS HAS SAID THAT EVERYONE - LAY OR RELIGIOUS - MUST PUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS ABOVE ALL ELSE; AND STRIVING TO DO THIS, EVEN IMPERFECTLY, WILL HELP THEM TO BE LIKE CHRIST TO THE WORLD.**

**CATHOLIC NEWS AGENCY VATICAN CITY - 2 JULY 2017**

## PASTORAL THEME 2.0

# BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST, GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER

WHEN WE ALLOW GOD'S LOVE INTO OUR HEARTS WE CAN BE INSPIRED TO ANSWER JESUS' CALL TO FOLLOW HIM, TO DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR FAITH AND TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### 2.1 Encourage a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and practices

#### 2.2 Awaken the faith of those who no longer experience God's love in their lives

### PARISH TASKS

2.1.1 Offer educational programmes designed to enable those with faith to grow their commitment to God, and to deepen their knowledge through prayer and the sacraments - especially through the weekly celebration of Sunday Mass.

**Ongoing from April 2019**

2.1.2 Put in place a plan to deliver parish-based or inter-parish ministry to:

- parents of children for Baptism;
- children and families preparing for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation;
- young people;
- couples preparing for marriage; and
- adults wishing to mature in their faith.

**Ongoing from June 2018**

2.1.3 Create a fully trained Baptism Team.

**To be completed by April 2019**

2.2.1 Implement initiatives designed to reawaken the faith of those who no longer feel the need to take part in the sacraments. Resources and training will be made available at diocesan level.

**To be completed by June 2020**



**POPE JOHN PAUL II ADDRESSING YOUNG PEOPLE SAID “DEAR FRIENDS, ALLOW YOURSELVES TO BE DRAWN TO CHRIST, ACCEPT HIS INVITATION TO FOLLOW HIM. GO AND PREACH THE GOOD NEWS THAT REDEEMS; DO IT WITH HAPPINESS IN YOUR HEARTS AND BECOME COMMUNICATORS OF HOPE IN A WORLD WHICH IS OFTEN TEMPTED TO DESPAIR.”**

## PASTORAL THEME 3.0

# WORK TO MAKE JESUS KNOWN AND LOVED

**THROUGH THE GOSPEL WE EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF THE FATHER, FORGIVENESS IN THE SON AND THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE PART OF THE WORK OF MAKING THIS RELEVANT IN OUR OWN LIVES IN TODAY'S SOCIETY.**

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**3.1 Spread the message of the Gospel into all areas of human life and in doing so, our actions should be characterised by sensitivity, compassion, mercy and joy**

**3.2 Strive to deepen relationships with other faith traditions. This example of living faith will inspire and attract others to Christ.**

**3.3 Build parish capability**

### PARISH TASKS

3.1.1 Organise at least one Parish Mission.  
**No later than 2021**

3.1.2 Develop more occasions for Eucharistic Adoration.  
**Ongoing from June 2018**

3.1.3 Provide a range of opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.  
**Ongoing from June 2018**

3.1.4 Support people to pray in their homes and with others.  
**Ongoing from June 2018**

3.2.1 Identify one local and/or global social cause to address each year. Where possible, work together with other Christian churches.  
**Each year beginning 2018**

3.3.1 Create parish groups with a focus on the liturgy of the Mass, music and how to gather in the absence of a priest.  
**Ongoing from June 2018**

## DIOCESAN SUPPORT

# PASTORAL PLANNING RESOURCES

**OUR DIOCESAN AND PARISH STRUCTURES WILL REFLECT THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL FOR THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. THESE STRUCTURES WILL BE RESOURCED WITH SKILLED PERSONNEL AND FINANCE.**

**The following resources will be put in place to support implementation of the Plan:**

- Diocesan Pastoral Council to support the Bishop in making the vision for our Diocese a reality;
- Diocesan Pastoral Officer to provide support, training and guidance on the delivery of the Plan;
- Provision for training new and existing Parish Pastoral Councils;
- Diocesan strategy to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life;
- Diocesan Communications Team for internal and external communication; and
- Preparatory group to plan and organise a Diocesan Assembly in 2021.

### **Additional Support**

Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre will strive to provide parishes with the support they need to achieve their potential. It will offer advice and guidance in relation to the support available to parish schools and the wider parish.



# DIOCESAN SUPPORT

## REFERENCE RESOURCES

### PUBLICATIONS

#### **Share the Good News**

National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland.

Authors: Irish Episcopal Conference

Published: 2010, Veritas, Dublin

#### **Called Together. Making a Difference.**

A Framework Document for Youth Ministry in Ireland

The National Committee of Diocesan Youth Directors

(NCDYD) & the Commission for Pastoral Renewal and Adult

Faith Development of the Irish Bishops' Conference.

Published: 2009, Veritas, Dublin

#### **Grouping Parishes for Mission. An Exploration of Key Issues.**

Council for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith Development of the Irish Bishops' Conference.

Published: 2011, Veritas, Dublin

#### **Evangelise Today. Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.**

Reflections and Resources for Practitioners.

Authors: Council for Pastoral Renewal and Adult Faith

Development of the Irish Bishops' Conference

Published: 2014, Veritas, Dublin

#### **The Energy Within.**

Parish Pastoral Councils Today. Discern, Decide, Implement, Involve.

Authors: Doherty, J., Coyle, P., Crilly, T., & Crilly, O.

Published: 2016, Veritas, Dublin

#### **It is good for us to be here.**

Gathered on a Weekday when Eucharist is not celebrated.

Authors: National Centre for Liturgy

Published: 2015, Veritas, Dublin

#### **Put Out into the Deep**

A Vision for Implementing 'Share the Good News' in the Diocese of Derry.

Published: 2012, Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre

available on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)

### PAPAL PUBLICATIONS

---

#### **Pope John Paul II**

**At the Beginning of the New Millennium** (2001)

*Link to document on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)*

*Also available on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)*

#### **Ecclesia in Europa** (2003)

*Link to document on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)*

*Also available on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)*

#### **Pope Benedict XVI**

**Deus Caritas Est** (2005)

*Link to document on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)*

*Also available on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)*

#### **Pope Francis**

**Evangelii Gaudium** (2013)

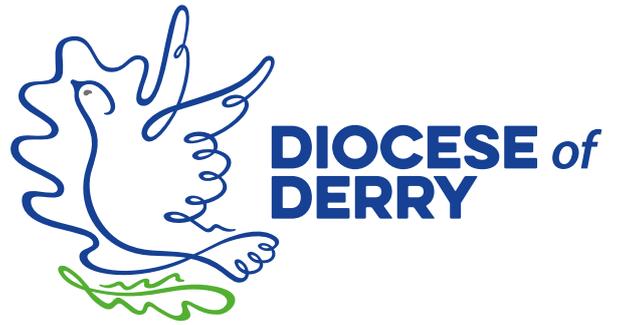
*Link to document on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)*

*Also available on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)*

**Gaudete et Exsultate** (2018) Apostolic Exhortation on the call to holiness in today's world

*Link to document on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)*

*Also available on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)*



## LOOKING AHEAD

'God is Love' - our Derry Diocesan Plan 2018-2021 sets out the concrete steps that we hope will take place in every parish community from 2018 to 2021. Over the period of the Plan we will work towards holding a Diocesan Assembly in 2021, bringing together representatives of all parishes, pastoral groups, religious and clergy to discern the next step in God's way forward. The Assembly will form part of the celebration of the 15th Centenary of the birth of St Columba, patron saint of Derry. As we move forward, let us remember the Opening Prayer from the feast of St Columba.

*Almighty God, who filled the heart of your abbot Columba  
with the joy of the Spirit  
and with deep love for those in his care,  
grant, through his intercession,  
that your pilgrim people may follow him,  
strong in faith, sustained by hope,  
and one in the love that binds us to you.  
Through Christ Our Lord.  
Amen*

† Donal McKeown  
Bishop of Derry



## HELP SHAPE YOUR DIOCESE

Find out how your talents and experience can help your parish.  
Contact the Diocesan Pastoral Officer:

Tel: **028 7126 2302**

Email: **[office@derrydiocese.org](mailto:office@derrydiocese.org)**

Visit: **[www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org)**