



LENTEN CALL TO PRAYER 2020

Dear Friends,

We have begun our Lenten Journey with the call to *Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving* from the Gospel of St. Matthew on Ash Wednesday. Our Lenten journey is a time for each person to draw closer to the Lord as we prepare to celebrate the Easter message of hope in the Resurrection of Jesus.

Over the past three years we have been engaged in a Diocesan-wide *Listening Process* which invited the church communities in our parishes to gather and discern together the way they wish to participate in the mission entrusted to us by the Lord, now and into the future.

We are now at an important point in our discernment process. We are reflecting on the findings of our gatherings and meetings. It is clear there is a strong desire on the part of people and priests to work together to provide leadership for our parish communities as we plan for the future, in particular, to developing our faith and spiritual resources for our Church in a changing world.

We are being challenged to focus with renewed energy on working with young people and families to ensure that our parish communities continue to be places where people can draw support and strength. We are being called to celebrate our faith with life-giving liturgies that truly express how God's love is working through each one of us and calling us, as parish faith communities, to reach out to those in need in our world – both near and far.

When we set out on the Listening Process I invited you, in my letter "Prepare the way of the Lord", to ask the Holy Spirit to be the guide and force of our reflections.

At this important moment of our journey I ask you during this Lent to participate in our '*Lenten Call to Prayer*' as we embark on the next stage of our journey of developing an appropriate pastoral plan for our diocese.

Over the coming weeks, at various gatherings of Parishes throughout the diocese, we will work on preparing a draft pastoral plan. As with the other phases of the listening process you will be invited to give your feedback and observations.

As part of our *Lenten Call to Prayer* I ask you to participate in our Diocese wide prayer initiative to support the next phase of our discernment – praying as a community that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide us.

My thanks to all of you who have participated in our Listening Process and engaged in the ongoing conversations at the Gatherings of Parishes around the diocese. I invite all parishioners to work with us as we prepare to finalise a Cashel & Emly Pastoral Plan for 2020-25.

The input of, and ongoing conversation with, all parishioners is vital to the effectiveness of our pastoral plan. Therefore, it is important that you join with us as we move towards the launch of the Diocesan Plan at Pentecost, on 31st May 2020 – the birthday of the Church which celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit and the call to mission of all the baptised.

I invite you and your families to participate in this prayer initiative at weekend Masses, as part of family prayer, Eucharistic Adoration and in your different prayer and apostolic groups throughout the diocese.

Our Diocesan Biblical Resource Group has prepared a resource for reflecting on the Sunday Gospels for Lent using a method called "*Hearing- Happening-Hoping*" - to assist with prayerful reflection on the Gospels for each Sunday of Lent. I encourage you to use this resource as, through it, the Holy Spirit will guide us in our prayerful listening to each other as we enter more fully in the Sunday Lenten readings and continue our journey of discernment.

As Mary our Mother gathered with the disciples in the Upper Room they were empowered by the coming of the Holy Spirit. As we gather in our "upper rooms" may Mary be with us to guide us in understanding and wisdom, and may we be empowered by the Holy Spirit in all our efforts to discern the future plans for our diocese.

In faith together we pray

"Come Holy Spirit"

+ Kieran O'Reilly



