



## “Let us Go to God’s House” Psalm 122

Dear Friends in the Risen Lord,

Welcome, Fáilte, to all who have gathered for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist in your local Churches throughout the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, today, when we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord.

We have waited for this moment and now, with thanksgiving and praise in our hearts, we gather around the altar for the sharing of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist, repeating the words of Psalm 122:1

“I rejoiced when I heard them say let us go to God’s House”.

In the Archdiocese we began a journey of sharing and listening over four years ago. A journey of searching as to how best we can be alive and serve the presence of the living God in our times. Last year, the journey as it neared the end of the important listening phase was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, as we begin to emerge from the weeks and months of restricted living, and above all, the physical absence from each other’s company in our churches and in society, I am pleased to inform you that we are in the final stages of fine tuning the Pastoral Plan titled: **“Seeds of Hope” 2021 -2026.** This is the fruit of the work that has been undertaken by you, the people of the Archdiocese, over these years.

My sincere thanks to all who participated in and facilitated the listening process – especially Fr. Martin Hayes, who was appointed Bishop of Kilmore in June last year. Since the Listening Process was completed, a period of reflection and discernment by the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Council of Priests has been taking place that now results in the Pastoral Plan: **Seeds of Hope 2021-2026.**

Next Sunday, we will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost and I ask you, when reflecting on the message of the Gospel of today and next Sunday, to listen to the call to each one of us to bear witness to the message of hope of the Risen Lord. Please include in your prayers over the coming days and weeks the much-loved prayer to the Holy Spirit: *Come Holy Spirit...* for the success of the next stage of our journey as we put into action the dreams and hopes we have for the future of our church in the Archdiocese.

Over the coming months, I will give you further updates, concerning the launching of the Plan and outlining its various “Seeds” – but the process will be dry and arid if it is not accompanied by prayer and reflection about what we are doing – we, the people of faith in the Archdiocese commit ourselves to actively participate in God’s mission to love and embrace our world.

Throughout the Easter season we have heard stirring accounts of the witness of the young church in the Acts of the Apostles as the disciples passed on their faith to new believers. These accounts remind us of the gift of faith we have received from parents, grandparents, teachers and neighbours. I hope and pray that we may find courage and support by the witness of those who have passed on the faith to us as we prepare together to embark on the next stage of our faith journey.

I place our journey under the care of Mary our Mother with the prayer taken from the letter of Pope Francis in his letter – the Joy of the Gospel.

*“Mary Virgin and Mother, Star of the New Evangelisation, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor. That the Joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world.*

*Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God’s little ones, pray for us.*

*Amen.*

Wishing you and your families every blessing as we prepare to welcome anew the Holy Spirit into our lives.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Kieran O’Reilly

**Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.**

**V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.**

**R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.**

**O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,**

**did instruct the hearts of the faithful,**

**grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise,**

**and ever enjoy His consolation,**

**Through Christ Our Lord,**

**Amen.**

**Ascension,**

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

