Dromore Diocesan Pastoral Council Newsletter

#1 AUTUMN 2025

Online Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

A highlight of the year's activities was the Novena to the Sacred Heart.

This online devotional event, running on the Dromore Diocese Facebook page and Newry Parish YouTube channel from June 19th to June 27th, served as both a spiritual renewal and a communal gathering, bringing together clergy and parishioners for nine days of prayer and reflection.

The novena provided an opportunity to align personal and collective intentions with the teachings of the Sacred Heart, reinforcing the core values of compassion, empathy, and love that underpin all of the DPC's endeavours.

Days one and two were led by Deacon Anthony Moffett, day three by the children of St Patrick's Primary School (Ballymaghery) Hilltown, day four by pupils of the Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry, day five by young people from our diocese whilst on pilgrimage to Knock, day six by staff and students from Ceara School, Lurgan, day seven by Fr BrianFitzpatrick and parishioners from Moyraverty, day eight by Mrs Pauline McMahon, Newry Parish, and day nine by Archbishop Eamon Martin.

A heartfelt thank you to all those who participated and logged on to pray the Novena.

Inside

Irish Synodal Journey: Spring 2025 Events

Across Ireland during spring 2025, diocesan and parish gatherings brought people together to review the themes that emerged in Ireland during the Universal Synod to identify priorities for action. Learn about the outcomes inside.

Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

A highlight of the year's activities was the online Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Read more about this online devotional event on this page.

Gatherings and Workshops

Over the course of 2024/25, three primary gatherings were organised to capture insights and information vital to the Synodal Church's mission. These gatherings were structured around three pivotal areas: 1) Communications, 2) Music, 3) Engagement with the Clergy and Youth. Learn more inside.

Activities for 2025 -2026

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will focus on four key areas in the year ahead. Find out what they are inside.

Scan the QR Code With Your Phone Camera to Visit the Pastoral Council Section of the Diocesan Website

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www.dromorediocese.org/diocesan-pastoral-council

Welcome

Welcome to the Inaugural Edition of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) Newsletter.

We are thrilled to connect with you through this first edition of our DPC Newsletter, where we are excited to share the latest developments within Dromore Diocese. As we are still in the formation stages, our DPC members also participate in the Synodal Group (SG), and together, we have made significant progress over the past year in fostering dialogue and collaboration within our church community.

Our dedicated team has prioritised enhancing communication and enriching spiritual experiences through planning and prayer, all while aligning our initiatives with the spirit of synodality. In this Newsletter, you will find an overview of our accomplishments, which stemmed from various gatherings with Clergy and Parishioners, as well as a special focus on the Novena dedicated to the Sacred Heart—an event that greatly united and inspired our community.

As we progressed through the year, our focus shifted towards the work necessary for the Irish National Synodal Journey. You can find more details about this important endeavour further along in this Newsletter.

This year, we concentrated our efforts on three primary areas: Communication, Youth, and Music.

Through our sustained commitment to communication and collaborative efforts in music and practical initiatives, the DPC and Synodal Group have made commendable strides in enhancing the vibrancy and unity of our church community. By embracing the principles of a Synodal Church and fostering meaningful dialogue with Clergy and Parishioners, we have built a solid foundation for future initiatives. The success of the Novena to the Sacred Heart exemplifies the significance of a collaborative spirit working together and spiritual guidance in fulfilling our church's mission – Nourished by Word and Sacrament, we seek to become Christ for one another.

On behalf of the DPC, I extend our sincere gratitude for your support and prayers throughout the year. We eagerly anticipate your continued engagement and encourage you to reach out to us via the Diocesan Office. Thank you for being an integral part of our community as we journey together.

Patricia Maguire

Mrs Patrica Maguire
DPC & SG Chairperson

Dromore Pastoral Council Members

Most Reverend Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Apostolic Administrator of Dromore

Mr Pearse Thornbury

Ms Paula Jordan

Ms Lisa Murray

Mr Kieran Murphy

Mrs Frances McNally

Rev Anthony Moffett

Fr Thierry Marteaux

Mrs Patricia Maguire (Chair)

Mrs Lynn Laverty

Mr Stephen Greene

Fr Brian Fitzpatrick

Dr Mark Byrne

Activities for 2025 -2026

The DPC met in June 2025 and agreed that the focus for the next year would be on four key areas:

1) The communications group will review the report generated from the communications gathering and agree action points.

2) We would continue to assist with the established work programme for youth.

3) A music Event for all Diocesan Choirs and Musicians will be organised for 22 November 2025. More details soon.

4) Commence engagement with Diocesan Ministers of the Word and Eucharistic Ministers by early 2026.

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www.facebook.com/dromorediocese

Or visit

www.dromorediocese.org/diocesan-pastoral-council

Synodal Gatherings

Across Ireland during spring 2025, diocesan and parish gatherings brought people together to review the themes that emerged in Ireland during the Universal Synod to identify priorities for action. These priorities will then be considered at a pre-synodal assembly this October.

The journey of the Irish Synodal Pathway during this year will be approached through the stance of "Hope," which also reflects the spirit of the Jubilee Year in the Universal Church.

We hosted two Conversations in the Spirit Events in Newry and Lurgan as well as events for young adults.

There were 17 Themes https://synod.ie/resources-for-spring-gatherings-2025 provided by the National Team and Prompted by the Holy Spirit.

The themes identified as priority within Dromore Diocese are listed in the column to the right.

Overall, the conversation reflects a collective yearning for revitalisation in faith, community, and participation within the Church, emphasising education, co-responsibility, and belonging.

This work is continuing at a National Level and details can be found at *https://synod.ie* Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council & Synodal Team will be attending the National Event in Kilkenny on Saturday 18 October 2025.

The Final Report from the Universal Synod on Synodality, held in Rome in 2023 and 2024, is available at the following link: *www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf*

To keep up to date with all news please follow us on facebook at *www.facebook.com/dromorediocese* or scan the QR code on the front page.

Conversations in The Spirit

Throughout the year, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Synodal Group highlighted the value of 'Conversations in the Spirit' as a way to root discussions in prayer, reflection, and mutual understanding. This approach helped foster meaningful engagement with clergy and parishioners, strengthening relationships and shaping a shared vision for the Church's future.

Parish Pastoral Councils or groups wishing to learn more about Conversations in the Spirit can contact the DPC. Further information is also available at *https://synod.ie/conversations-in-the-spirit*

Priority Synodal Themes for Dromore

1. Family: Families are essential for nurturing faith and fostering a sense of belonging. Support groups for families are urged, as they play a critical role in vocational development and community.

2. Youth: Young people are seen as the future of the Church. There is a need to provide positive affirmation, education, and spaces for them to connect their lives with their faith.

3. Lay Ministry: Greater involvement of laypeople in parish life is emphasised, with a call for education on the roles and responsibilities of lay ministers to enhance co-responsibility within the Church.

4. Baptism: A return to the true meaning of baptism is essential, highlighting its role as the beginning of an individual's faith journey and the need for renewal within the Church.

5. Education and Catechesis: There is a call for improved education, particularly for teachers, to ensure effective faith formation. Many parishioners lack understanding of their faith, necessitating better catechetical resources and support.

6. Co-Responsibility: The need for laity to take active roles in the Church is critical, yet many feel that participation is limited and often ridiculed. This theme underscores the shared responsibility of everyone to contribute to parish life.

7. Belonging: A sense of belonging is fundamental for individuals within the Church community, linking it to family, education, and participation in faith.

8. Role of Women: Recognition of the significant roles women play in the Church and the need for equality and support in various ministries.

9. Church Fracture: The current state of the Church is seen as fractured, with inconsistency in participation and a need for a unified approach to faith education and community involvement.

10. Welcome & Inclusion: Embracing those on the margins: the stranger; those with disability, those who feel estranged from the church; thereby creating a church where they feel welcomed, accepted and valued which is crucial for a nurturing Church community that values all individuals.

Participants at the music event held in Moyraverty Parish in November 2024

Gatherings and Workshops

Over the course of the year, three primary gatherings were organised to capture insights and information vital to the Synodal Church's mission. These gatherings were structured around three pivotal areas: Communications, Music, and Engagement with the Clergy/Youth.

1. Communications: The first gathering took place on 19th June 2024 at Dromantine Conference Centre. The focus was on improving the communication channels within the diocesan community. Members assessed current methods of outreach and explored innovative ways to engage more effectively with parishioners. This included strategies for utilising digital platforms to foster more inclusive and interactive dialogue among church members. Scan the QR code on the front page to download the report.

2. **Music:** Recognising the powerful role of music in worship and community building, a second event was held on Saturday 16th November 2024 at St Anthony's Parish Centre in Moyraverty Parish. The aim of the event was to recognise the invaluable contribution of those involved in music ministry leadership, and it offered Archbishop Eamon and members of the DPC the opportunity to consult with them, to listen to their positive experiences, determine what support they may need, and to ask them about their vision for the future. Conversations in the Spirit methodology was used on the day to glean insight. Scan the QR code on the front page to download the music event synopsis document.

3. Engagement with the Clergy: On June 18th, 2025, we hosted a meaningful afternoon with the clergy at Holy Cross Monastery in Rostrevor. This gathering provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with our Clergy and share updates regarding the DPC's initiatives. We addressed the practical aspects of the council's mission, evaluating ongoing projects and identifying new opportunities for service and outreach. Following this meeting, we circulated three key communications focused on Communication, Music, and Youth. The DPC will be taking forward the insights gleaned from the engagement to shape the work programme for the coming year including practical actions.

4. Youth – there has been a very active Youth Programme this year with Conversations in the Spirit taken place with numerous students across the Pastoral Areas. Young adults & people helped out with Palm Sunday – Carlo Acutis event in Dromantine, Pentecost Sunday, 'Dare to Hope' at Knock Shire. Scan the QR code on the front page to download the Young Adult Synod Report.

Mrs Frances McNally, Dromore Youth Director, speaks during the 'engagement with clergy 'event held at Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor on June 18th 2025.