

Archdiocese of Dublin

Letter from Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

I am writing to you to encourage your participation in a significant consultation that is being launched in our Archdiocese today.

Over the years, I have become aware of a growing need to review how we prepare for and celebrating the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation.

Many people are asking how can these celebrations be joyful encounters with the Risen Christ rather than just 'rites of passage'? How can they be celebrations of a vibrant faith rather than the 'conveyor belt' they are often described?

In response to these concerns and following the proposal of the Priests Council, I set up a Review Group last Autumn. Its task is to consult widely and deeply and then to make recommendations for the future.

The first step in the consultation will be to listen. The Review Group wants to listen to the people who are most involved with these sacraments. They will listen to parents. They will listen to clergy, to pastoral workers and catechists, to sacramental teams, to pastoral councils, as well as to others in the parish. In addition, in the case of First Communion and Confirmation, they will listen to people in our schools, to principals and to teachers.

To help with this listening process, I am personally inviting you to respond to a short set of questions, prepared by the Review Group. The on line questionnaire will be available for a period of three weeks, starting today (Monday 4th)

Along with this, the Review Group are contacting a number of parishes from across the sixteen deaneries, to ensure that a representative sample of parishes will have replied, along with those who respond to my invitation here.

This listening will be followed by a further stage of prayerful discerning. All the responses will be collated in order to reflect on what is being said.

I warmly encourage you to participate, to express your views and to give voice to your reflections.

I want to stress how important and significant this review process is. If we all play our part, it can have a transforming effect. It can help change the quality of how we accompany young parents and young families. It can help us form tomorrow's church; a church of faith-filled families who are confident witnesses.

Let us pray that God's Spirit of Wisdom will inspire us as we begin this journey together in 2019.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin