

St Bernadette's Parish Pastoral Council – Annual Report (2023-2024)

Welcome to our annual report for 2023/24 which provides us with the opportunity to inform you about the purpose of St Bernadette's Parish Pastoral Council, (PPC), provide a brief insight into the activities undertaken over the last 12 months, and also to highlight our plans and ambitions for the year ahead.

If you would like more information about our aims and objectives or would like to make suggestions regarding our future work, please do not hesitate to speak to any member of the council or contact us at ppc@stbernadettesparish.org

A Parish Pastoral Council

A PPC is a faith based group through which priests and people work together as coresponsible partners in furthering the mission of Christ in parish communities. It involves a group of people of God (clergy, religious and lay people) being called upon to review pastoral matters, reflect on them thoroughly and collaborate in planning the way forward for the parish. It is a means whereby parishioners can take part in discussions that relate to the spiritual and pastoral development of the parish.

PPC Membership

Very Reverend Brendan Hickland P.P.	Sheenagh Murtagh
Michael Doherty	Bernie Farry
Eamon Foster	Peggy McCann
Michael McDonald	Patricia McFlynn
John Britton Justin	Liz Mahoney

Work Undertaken by St Bernadette's Pastoral Council

As a pastoral council we continue to meet each month (September to June) to discuss and plan for various activities within our parish. We have continued to reflect on and discuss the pastoral issues that affect the whole church, in particular those issues at a diocesan level that impact on us all, in particular, with regards to the Pathways to the Future programme

Pathways to the Future

Pathways to the Future is a process by which the diocese has been proactively preparing for the challenges that are to be faced for the church in the years ahead, focusing on how priests are supported, how parishes are structured, how liturgical services are celebrated, and the future role of parishioners. This continues to be a critical time for the diocese, considering the practical arrangements required to support the future needs of priests, parishes and parishioners across Down & Connor. There are currently 86 parishes and 146 churches which are ministered to by around 84 priests in active ministry.

As part of this process of change, representatives from St Bernadette's PPC have attended meetings facilitated by the Pathways Committee to maintain awareness of proposed future changes across the diocese and in our parish. There are ongoing discussions with regards the formation of families of parishes across the diocese. The PPC continue to engage with the Pathways Committee on proposals that will involve St Bernadette's parish.

It is anticipated that as the process develops and further information becomes available, that the parish will hold information sessions for all parishioners to attend and hear more about the challenges and changes being planned.

Welcoming Ministry

St Bernadette's Fáilte Group (Welcoming Committee) was formally established in 2023 and members of this group are clearly visible at each Mass to welcome, assist and direct all parishioners and visitors as they enter and leave the church. The Fáilte group has continued to grow in numbers and along with the PPC is currently developing welcome signage for the church porches. New members to the Fáilte Group are most welcome. Please contact any member of the group for further information.

Parish Pastoral Council Membership

We were delighted to welcome 3 new members to the PPC in November 2023 to help broaden and strengthen the current membership team.

Advent and Lent

It has now become an established tradition for St Bernadette's PPC to produce Advent & Lenten Calendars for parishioners which contain daily reflections during these important times of the year. This information is also shared on social media platforms. Special editions of the Advent and Lenten calendars have been produced and made available for the children of our parish.

During Lent, in addition to the variety of online and printed materials available for parishioners, the PPC once again organised Morning Prayers which were offered before weekday Masses and also Stations of the Cross on the Tuesday evenings before the Easter ceremonies.

Prayer Around the Cross – Evening for World Peace

In March 2024, St. Bernadette's Parish Pastoral Council led a service of Lenten Prayer Around the Cross for Peace. This short prayer service provided an opportunity for parishioners to come together in song and prayer for peace in our world, our community, our families and in our hearts.

Holy Rosary PPC

St Bernadette's PPC continue to liaise with members of the Holy Rosary PPC to discuss the work undertaken by both pastoral councils. Further meetings are planned in this coming year to identify and explore any possible areas of collaboration between our parishes.

The Year Ahead

Over the next 12 months, we will be continuing with our activities in faith development and will continue to promote and inform parishioners of our work. We anticipate that further information will be available on the implementation of the Pathways programme which we hope to share with our parishioners.

We would welcome enquiries from those interested in assisting with our Parish Pastoral Council work. Please contact us at ppc@stbernadettesparish.org