



diocese
of limerick
our catholic community

Diocese of Limerick

Draft Pastoral Plan

15th October 2016



SYNOD
2016

JOURNEYING TOGETHER IN FAITH

"THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH WILL GUIDE YOU"
JOHN JOHN 16:13

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Introduction

The Synod vote has given us an overall direction for our diocese and also a clear thrust for each theme thus providing a Vision to guide us in the years ahead. It has also enabled us to prioritise proposals within the theme and devise a strategy for delivering the broad range of actions identified.

In order that we can realise our Vision our overall strategy is to develop capacity or ability to deliver at diocesan and local level.

You will see in each theme that we aim to begin by doing something at diocesan level to increase our ability to move on this theme – this is achieved by training, employing or appointing people to key positions. Then, in turn we aim to similarly develop the ability on the ground to make progress on actions by providing training and resources and ensuring there are people at local level who can deliver actions in this theme.

We have many proposals and many actions named in the plan – the intention is that local communities approach many of these (the ones that are not core or essential) as they would a menu and choose those that are appropriate to their circumstances.

Finally, there are two other categories of proposals for which we have employed a different strategy.

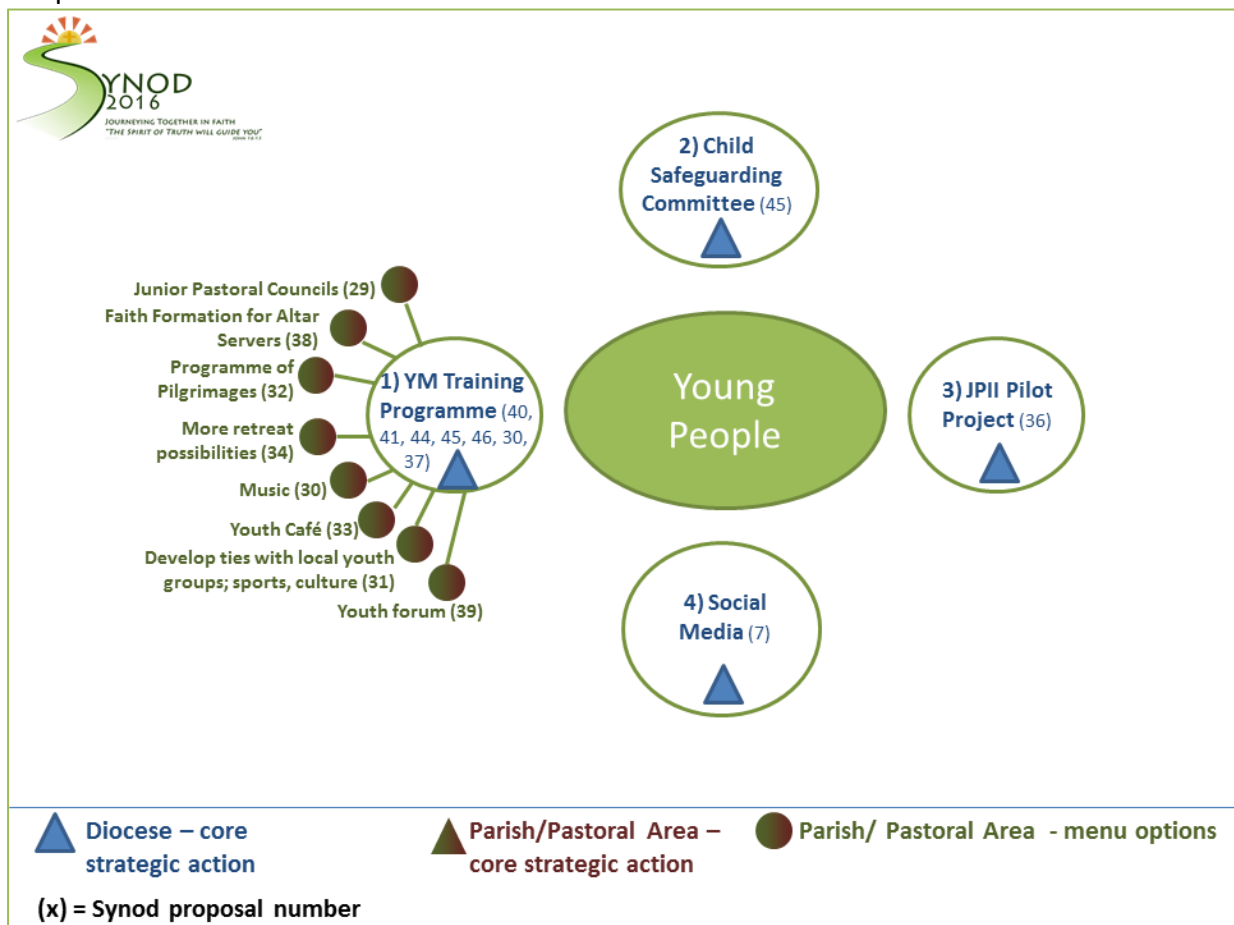
Firstly, there are those proposals brought forward by groups or agencies who are already working in this area and who have experience and expertise, for example Compassionate Communities, Bedford Row, Children's' Grief project. Here the strategy is to work with and support these groups rather than working in parallel. Secondly some proposals have been brought forward by delegates themselves who have a passion and experience in the particular area, for example, Inter and Intra faith dialogue, Living with disability, *Laudato Si* and care for the Environment, or the *JP II Awards*. Again here the strategy is to go back to those delegates and work with them to act upon their proposals.

Theme 1: Young People

Vision

By implementing the proposals accepted in the Synod we hope to ensure that young people feel connected, involved and active in a multigenerational church whereby grandparents, parents and children minister to each other. The overall thrust of the vote on the proposals at the Synod was to replicate at a local level the success of the youth ministry at diocesan level - to create local opportunities for young people to meet their peers in the *Eaglais Óg*.

The following figure provides an overview of the actions proposed under the theme of Young People:



The proposed actions are outlined in more detail below:

Core Strategic Action One	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese will develop and begin the delivery of a youth ministry training programme for volunteer youth ministry leaders. This programme will include a range of elements highlighted in other votes – safeguarding, music, media, mental health, evangelisation.	40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 30, 37.	2017-2018

Further Actions: The above strategic action will enable the newly trained Youth Ministry Leaders to choose from the following for their local community:		
• The formation of Junior Pastoral Councils	29	2018 ongoing
• Programme of ongoing faith formation for Altar Servers	38	2018 ongoing
• To develop a programme of pilgrimages, local, national and international	32	2018 ongoing
• To provide more retreat possibilities for young people in primary and secondary schools, college and young adults.	34	2018 ongoing
• To use music as a means of engaging young people in their local church and liturgy.	30	2018 ongoing
• To set up a Youth Café	33	2018 ongoing
• To develop ties between church and local youth groups - e.g. sport, culture	31	2018 ongoing
• Encourage and support youth leadership by means of a youth forum	39	2018 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Two	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The work of the Diocesan Child Safeguarding Committee in all its various aspects will continue to be fully supported and developed.	45	2017 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Three	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
A Pilot Project in which the JPII Awards will be launched in one community will occur.	36	2016-2017
Further Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The JPII Awards, following the Pilot, will be reviewed and rolled out. 	36	2017 ongoing

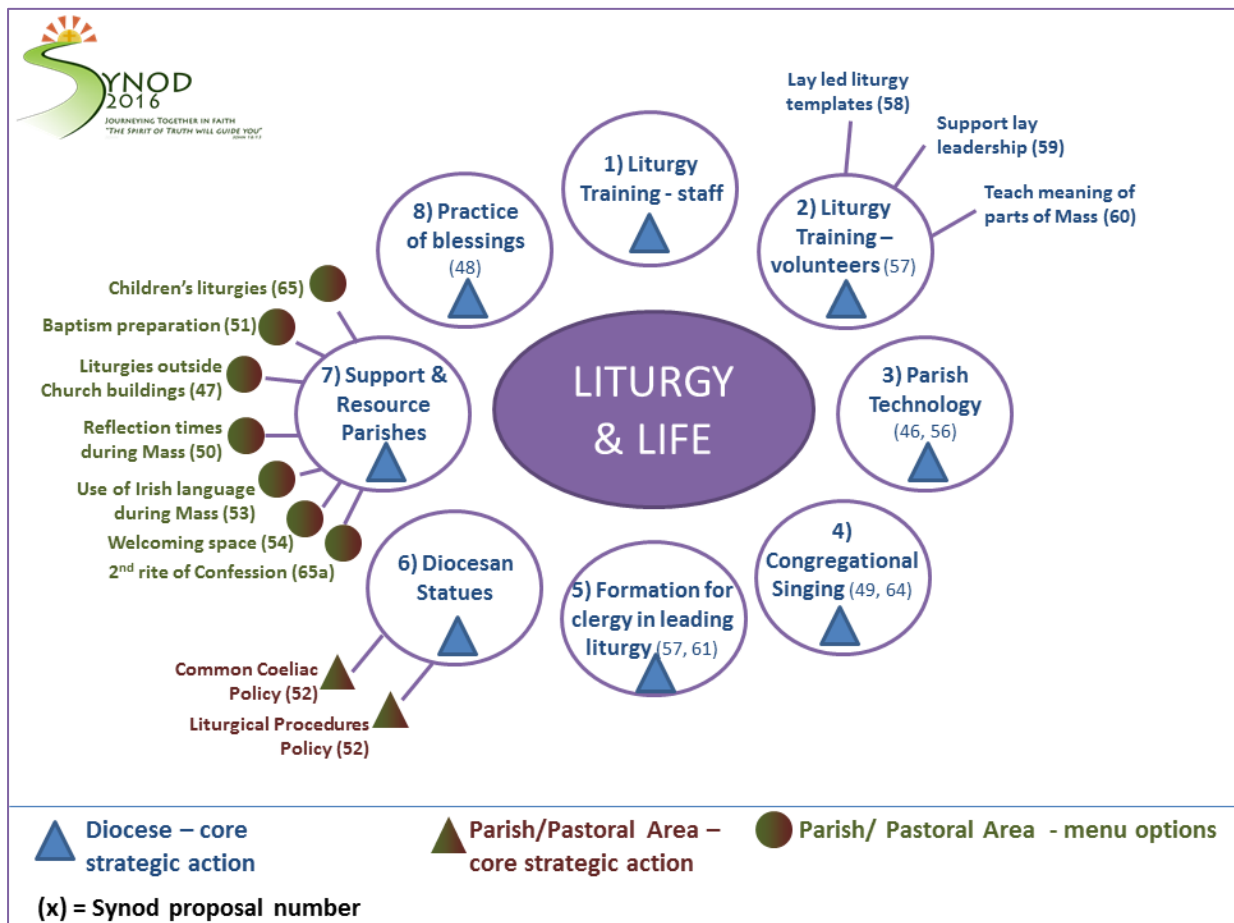
Core Strategic Action Four	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese will continue to use and further develop its use of social media especially with young people. Every parish to avail of Social Media e.g. a Facebook page. The diocesan office to take a central role in training and helping people/parishes to develop skills.	7	2017 ongoing

Theme 2: Liturgy and Life

Vision

The Synod demonstrated that there can be no separation between the liturgical life of the community and the ordinary life of those who share in it. There is an intimate link between life and liturgy. We must explore and advance the development of liturgical ministries in the diocese. The core thrust of the vote was towards enhancing the quality and experience of liturgy at a local level achieving ‘conscious, active and full’ participation. And here we saw that the emphasis was on liturgy that connects with the lives of ordinary people and that can be delivered by ordinary people. The development of local capacity for leadership in liturgy was a key enabler for this – both for liturgies led by clergy and by lay people.

The following figure provides an overview of the actions proposed under the theme Liturgy and Life:



The proposed actions are outlined in more detail on the next page:

Core Strategic Action One	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
To build capacity at diocesan level two people have been assigned for Liturgy Training in Maynooth.		2016

Core Strategic Action Two	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
Training will be provided for local volunteers to lead liturgies in the diocese on a designated date when priests are away on in-service training.	57	2017
<u>Further Actions:</u> This core strategic action will in turn enable subsequent delivery of the following proposals:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay led Liturgy templates 	58	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laity & Liturgies/Sacraments: develop and support lay leadership in liturgies and the celebration of sacraments (e.g. lay led liturgies of the Word with Holy Communion, homilies, baptisms, funerals, 'occasion' liturgies, etc.) 	59	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach people the meaning and source of all parts of the Mass and sacrament 	60	2017 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Three	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese will undertake an initiative to equip each parish church with modern technology	46, 56	2017-2020

Core Strategic Action Four	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
A training initiative will be designed and delivered by liturgy staff this coming year to foster congregational singing.	49, 64	2017

Core Strategic Action Five	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The Institute for Pastoral Studies will provide a Summer School in 2017 for clergy and as part of this ongoing formation will be delivered on homilies and leading liturgy.	57, 61	2017

Core Strategic Action Six	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
As a result of the Synod a set of Diocesan Statutes will be finalised which outlines the local law for this diocese containing procedures and policies.		2016
<u>Further Actions:</u> This core strategic action will in turn enable subsequent delivery of the following proposals:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Common Coeliac Policy will be developed 	52	2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarly other policies and procedures around liturgical procedures will be clarified where necessary and developed where necessary. 	62	2016

Core Strategic Action Seven	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese will support and resource parishes as they choose from a menu of local proposals.		2017 ongoing
<u>Further Actions:</u> Parishes will choose from:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have liturgies outside the church building. 	47	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection times during Mass. 	50	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on preparation for Baptism & its celebration during Sunday Mass 	51	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better recognition be given to hymns, prayers & blessings <i>as Gaeilge</i> which may be incorporated into the Eucharist 	53	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Environment- Create a Welcoming Space 	54	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a child friendly space in churches and also to facilitate 'play & pray' etc. during Masses 	55	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liturgical Music and resources for Family/Children's' Masses and Young People's Masses – Separate session for children, prepare for Christmas, Easter concert, Kids Clubs, Easter concert. 	65	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More general and imaginative use of the second rite of confession. 	65a	2017 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Eight	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
A Sunday will be dedicated throughout the diocese to reintroduce the practice of blessing into our lives. Ideas and resources will be provided to parishes.	48	2017

Theme 3: Faith Formation and Education

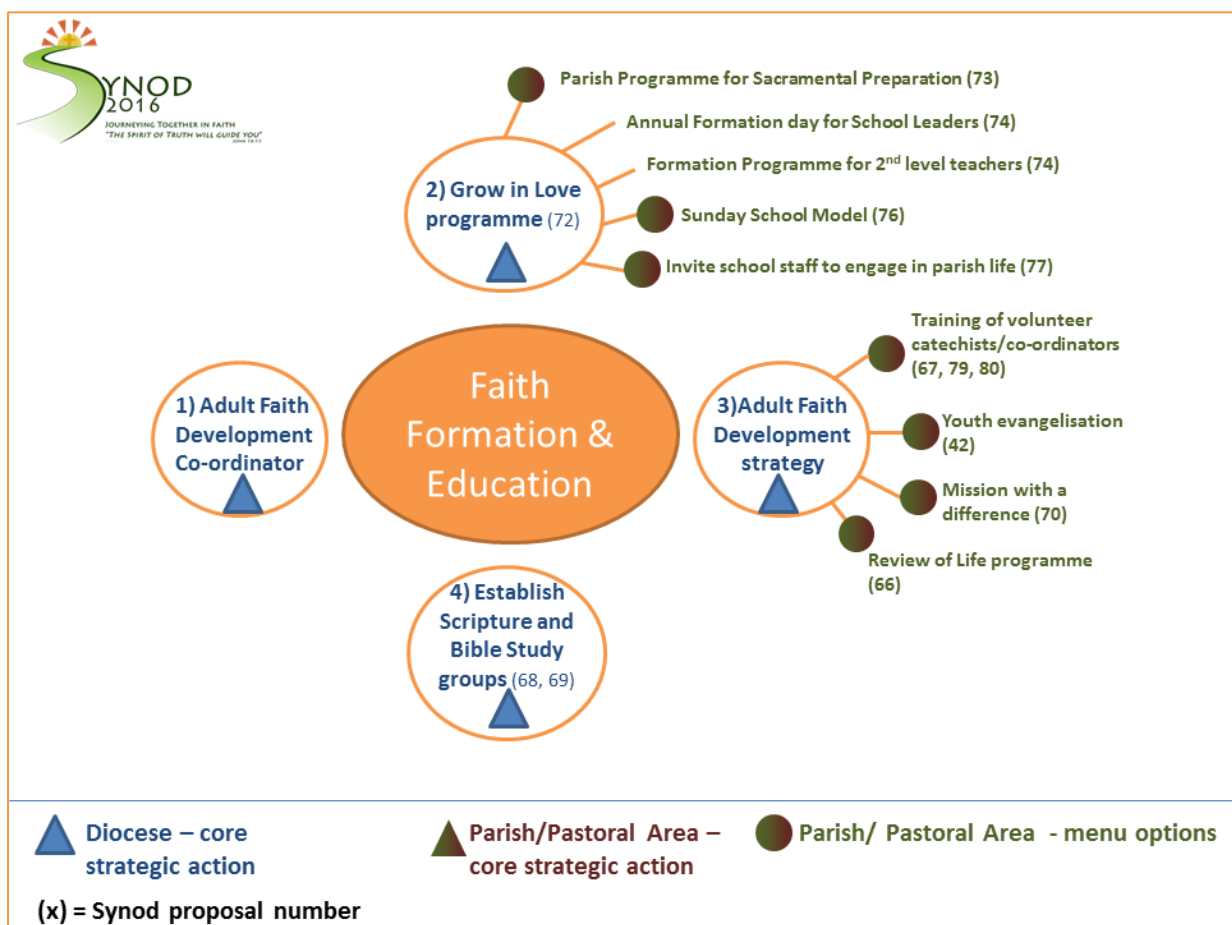
Vision

In Ireland, a systematic or formal approach to faith formation has largely been the remit of Catholic schools and focussed on children/young people. While this is important, we also need to be mindful that faith formation is a lifelong process and that adult catechesis ‘is considered the chief form of catechesis.’ In our local context, we are exploring new models of leadership for a Church in a changing reality, where the lay faithful are being entrusted with particular tasks in their faith community. In approaching faith formation, a core question is how do we meet people where they are at in their own lives, at their starting point, and accompany them on their faith journey?

While the voting here was more wide-ranging than the other areas we saw that the core concerns coincided with the two proposals that received the strongest vote in the whole Synod – an intentional faith formation initiative to share the Good News and the equipping of local volunteers to lead that initiative.

We believe that the core intention here is for a multi-layered approach to faith development – one that would succeed in connecting with people across the course of their lives rather than just at particular moments of sacramental preparation.

The following figure provides an overview of the actions proposed under the theme of Faith Formation and Education:



The proposed actions are outlined in more detail below:

Core Strategic Action One	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese has increased its capacity to respond in this area in that it has already employed a fulltime worker for adult faith formation.		2016

Core Strategic Action Two	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
<p>September 2015 saw the introduction of a new religious education curriculum and programme, <i>Grow in Love</i>, for Catholic primary schools. The diocese will implement this programme in all its dimensions. <i>Grow in Love</i> offers a unique opportunity to renew the partnership between home, school and parish, actively involving families in the faith formation of their children. The vision is that the parish community and parents will take a more prominent role in the future preparation of children. The strategy will include ongoing work in the schools and the promotion of home-school-parish links and will develop a parish programme for children’s sacramental preparation.</p> <p>Similarly, the diocese will encourage our Secondary schools to engage with the Catholic Schools Partnership’s process entitled ‘<i>Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School.</i>’</p>	72	2016 ongoing
<p><u>Further Actions:</u> This core strategic action will in turn enable subsequent delivery of the following proposals:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish support programme for children preparing to receive sacraments 	73	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategic approach to supporting Religious Education and the characteristic spirit of Catholic Primary Schools – annual formation day for school leaders 	74	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a formation programme for 2nd level teachers 	75	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parish to take responsibility for the evangelisation of children by means of a Sunday School Model 	76	2017 ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff of our Catholic schools are a wonderful resource to our communities. As an outcome of the Synod we will encourage and support this resource in the life of our local parishes. 	77	2017 ongoing
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Core Strategic Action Three	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese will commit to a faith development strategy prioritising adults. A central element of that strategy will be the training of volunteer ‘catechists’ or ‘coordinators’ to deliver this strategy at a local level.	67, 79, 80	2017-2019
Further Actions: This core strategic action will in turn enable subsequent delivery of the following proposals:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To form committee / working group to evaluate existing catechesis and religious education of young people and look at ways of introducing a Parish / Pastoral Area based evangelisation of youth. 	42	2018 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek creative ways to engage with people, through a ‘Mission with a Difference’, a ‘festival of faith’ with open air events. 	70	2018 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That a programme for Faith Formation be rolled out which uses a ‘Review of Life’ to support those who have had positive experiences to articulate not just what happened but their faith experience and journey. 	66	2018 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Four	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
Establish Scripture & Bible Study Groups across the diocese enabling us to rediscover who we are.	68, 69	2018

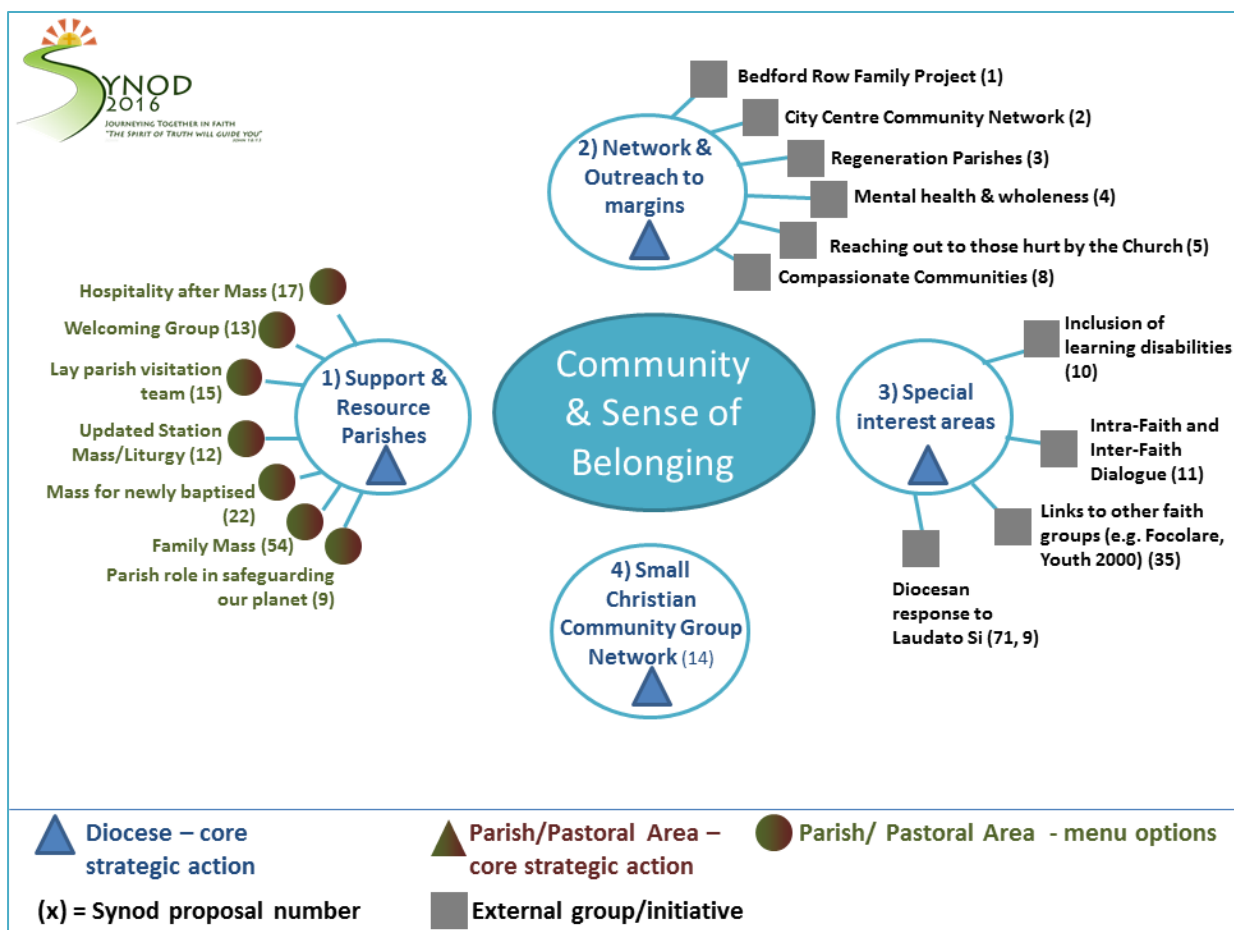
Theme 4: Community and Sense of Belonging

Vision

In Baptism we are all welcomed into the Christian community and conferred in our dignity as children of God. As children loved by God and in whom God delights we are called to be disciples of God’s infinite love. The Synod invites us to reflect on what Community and Sense of Belonging says to us in our time and in our Diocese. How can this theme renew us? How will it be reflected to the Diocese as a whole?

We recognised two approaches to the Synod vote on building an inclusive church. The first was in the ‘key’ of parish – local initiatives to reach out to local people. The second worked in wider categories – people on the margins across the city and the diocese. There were strong votes in favour of proposals from both approaches.

The following figure provides an overview of the actions proposed under the theme of Community and Sense of Belonging:



The proposed actions are outlined in more detail on the next page:

Core Strategic Action One	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese will develop a ‘menu’ strategy supporting, training and resourcing parishes as they choose from a menu of local proposals (similar to Core Strategic Action Seven in Liturgy and Life).		2017 ongoing
<u>Further Actions:</u> This core strategic action will in turn enable subsequent delivery in our parishes of the following proposals:		
• Hospitality after Mass	17	2017 ongoing
• Establish a Welcoming Group	13	2017 ongoing
• Lay parish visitation team to visit homes, hospital and nursing home	15	2017 ongoing
• Introduce an updated version of the Station Masses/Liturgies	12	2017 ongoing
• Continue tradition of inviting all children baptised during the year to a special Mass where they receive an individual blessing	22	2017 ongoing
• To foster the Family Mass	23	2017 ongoing
• Parishes collectively examine how they can make a difference to safeguarding our planet and develop outcomes that are practical and relevant in their own area.	9	2017 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Two	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
In regard to the wider categories of inclusion – people on the margins in the city, people with mental health issues, disability, people hurt by the church, the natural environment – the diocese will network with groups and agencies already engaged with these people with a view to concrete actions to support their work.		2017 ongoing
• Engage with marginalised: as a missionary Church/Bedford Row Family Project	1	2017 ongoing
• That the city delegates and parishes are encouraged to engage with and support the City Centre Community Network	2	2017 ongoing
• ‘Regeneration parishes - Caring for and inclusion of the Marginalised’	3	2017 ongoing
• In the area of mental health and wholeness engage with the marginalised members of our community – homeless, prisoners, travellers etc.,	4	2017 ongoing

and be a missionary church		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out to those hurt by church 	5	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassionate Communities – <i>Café Conversations</i> 	8	2017 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Three	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
A number of proposals were brought forward by delegates who have particular interest and/or expertise in aspects of community life. Contact will be made with those groups who brought forward particular proposals with a view to furthering these.		2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning disabilities to be included in the Diocesan plan 	10	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Intra-Faith and Inter-Faith Dialogue' 	11	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create links to other faith groups (e.g. <i>Focolare</i> and <i>Youth 2000</i>) 	35	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Diocesan response to <i>Laudato Si</i>, an approach/philosophy involving all schools, parish structures and communities 	71, 9	2017 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Four	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
That a network of Small Christian Community groups be established throughout the Diocese. Small communities of around 10 people would meet monthly to share a reading of Scripture, linked to life and building up community.	14	2018

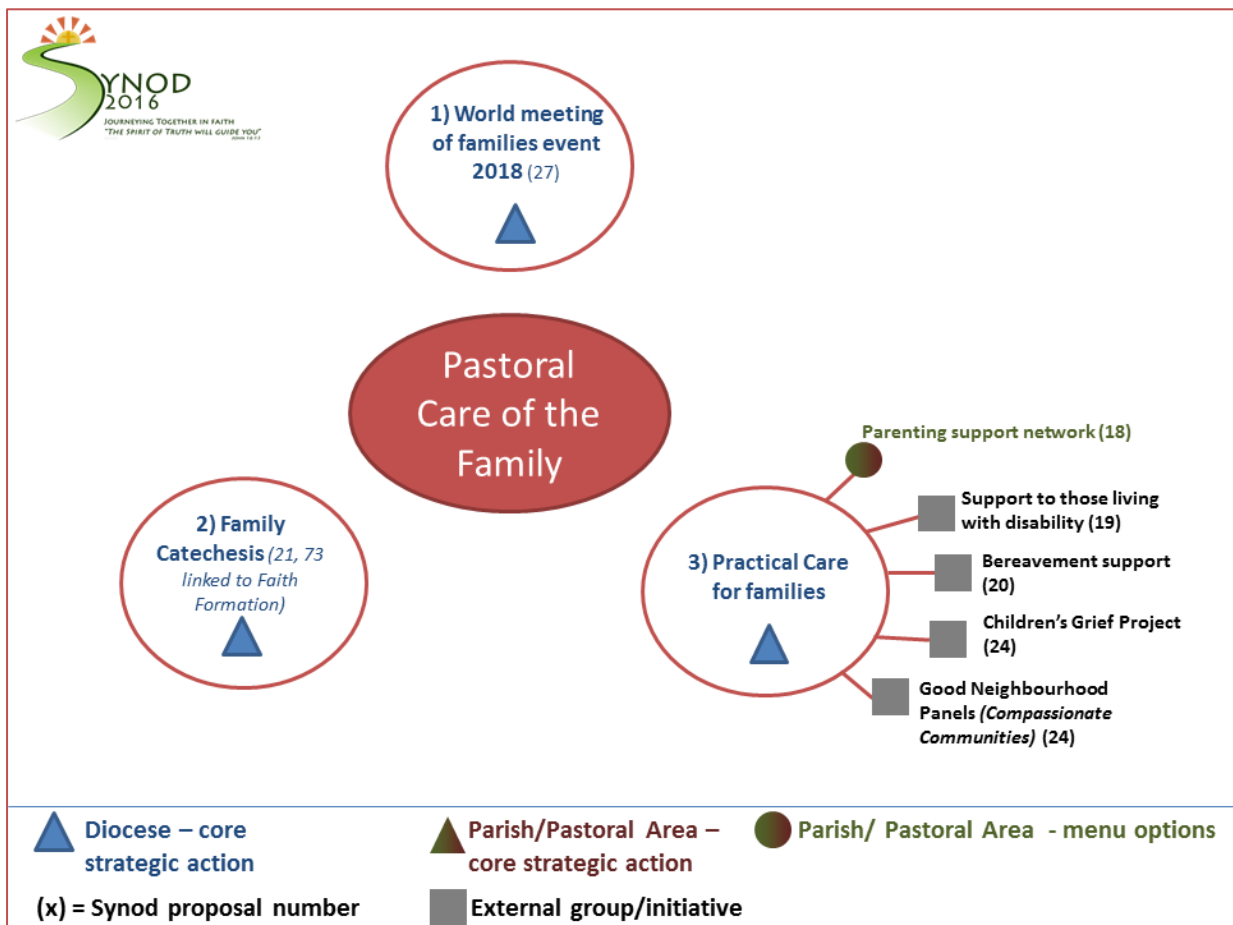
Theme 5: Pastoral Care of the Family

Vision

The Christian vision states that family life is sacred and its activities holy, and that the family can be described as the “domestic Church.” The family, ideally and potentially, is the school of human enrichment, where everyone is someone, where everyone belongs and has a place, where each is appreciated for the unique individual he or she is. It is also the school of Christian belief, where faith is caught, if not always explicitly taught. For all these reasons Pope Francis, told the Synod on the Family, “The Lord is asking us to care for the family, which has been from the beginning an integral part of his loving plan for humanity.”

There are two priorities in this vote at the Synod – a faith development outreach and secondly, practical care on areas of need, such as bereavement, disability and parenting. Any approach to faith development with parents needs to be dialogical – engaging with their burning issues, seeking to share the good news of the gospel in relation to those issues. The upcoming World gathering on families due in Ireland for 2018 offers a positive context for prioritising faith outreach to parents now.

The following figure provides an overview of the actions proposed under the theme of Pastoral Care of the Family:



The proposed actions are outlined in more detail below:

Core Strategic Action One	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese is inviting representatives to attend a Conference in Dublin on The Joy of Love, <i>Amoris Laetitia</i>, incorporating the launch of the World Meeting of Families Event in Ireland 2018. Following this a Diocesan Forum on the Family will be established. This Forum will fulfil the role of a Diocesan Promoter of Pastoral Care to the Family.	27	2016-2018

Core Strategic Action Two	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
(See Core Strategic Action 3 in 'Faith Formation')		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having trained lay Catechists/Sacramental Co-ordinators (as outlined under the theme of Faith Formation) the diocese will then be equipped to develop and deliver a support programme for parents to provide family catechesis and facilitate them in passing on the faith to their children, and deliver a parish support programme for children preparing to receive sacraments. 	21, 73	2017

Core Strategic Action Three	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
In the same way as we suggested around the Community Theme we will liaise, link and engage with groups and agencies that have the appropriate experience and expertise in providing practical care on areas of need.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Parenting Support Network to support parents (and their relationships) from the birth of their babies onwards. 	18	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to those living with disability. 	19	2017 ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer led community bereavement support trained and supported by Milford Care Centre. 	20	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Diocese, as part of its pastoral care of families programme, provide support to the <i>Children's Grief Project</i> in its work for children/young people affected by loss through death, separation or divorce. 	24	2017 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Good Neighbour Panels</i> - Milford Care Centre's <i>Compassionate Communities Project</i> trains Compassionate Communities Volunteers who will be available in each Parish to assist people living with life limiting illness (and/or their family caregivers) to ensure that their social and practical needs are met. 	25	2017 ongoing

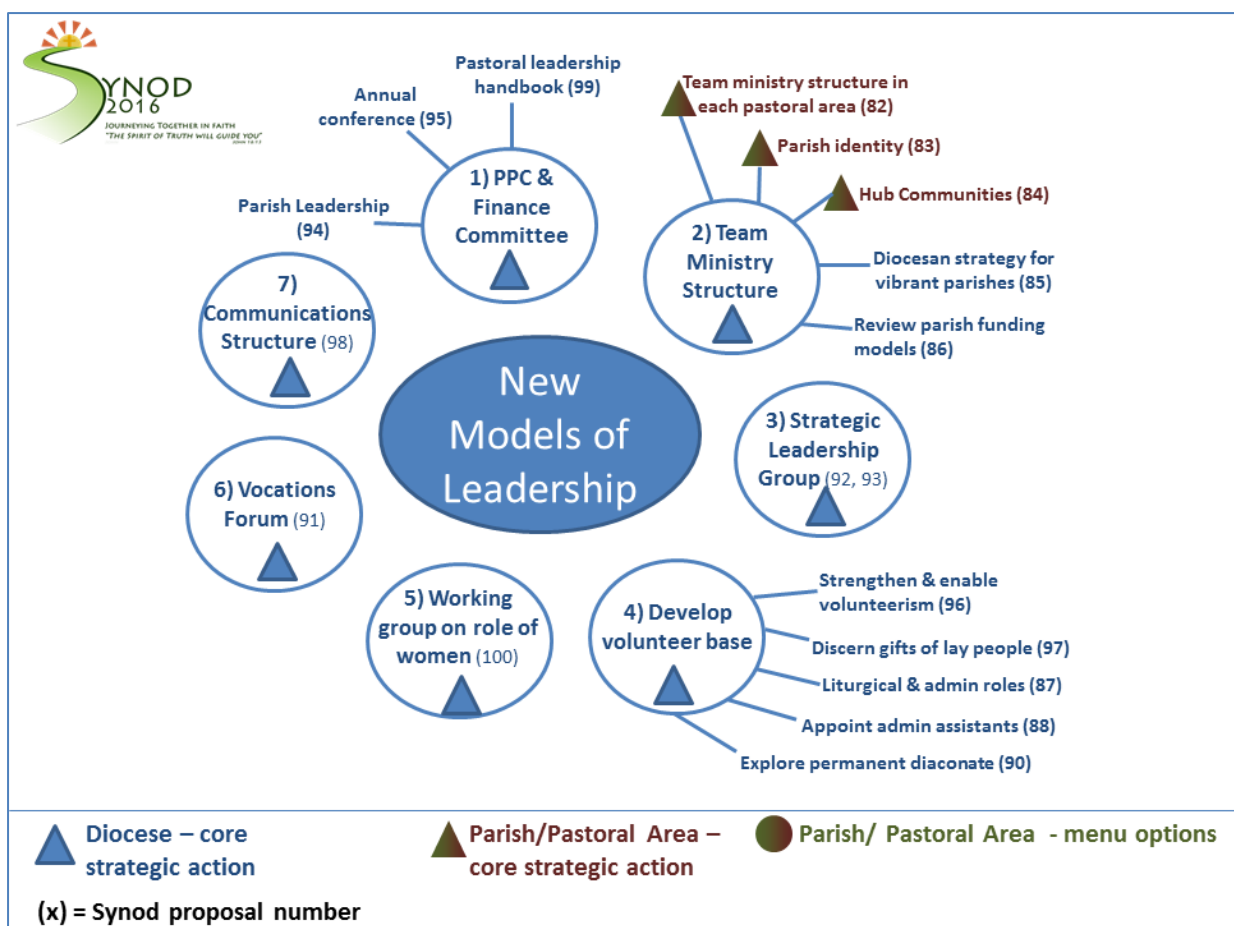
Theme 6: New Models of Leadership

Vision

We need to look at new models of leadership for two reasons. Firstly, because we are living in a very different world from the one most of us grew up in. We also need to look at new models because the concept of a leadership which depends almost exclusively on the priest cannot continue. That is what leadership, and not just the leadership of priests, should mean in the Christian community, discovering, recognising and fostering one another's gifts.

There was a very high proportion of strong votes in this section – there was very strong support from the Synod for the proposed actions on new models of leadership. At the core of this we saw an affirmation of the shared baptism of all members of the church – priests, religious and laity – and a desire that the gifts of all be brought into fruitful and collaborative service of the gospel.

The following figure provides an overview of the actions proposed under the theme New Models of Leadership:



The proposed actions are outlined in more detail on the next page:

Core Strategic Action One	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
The diocese is committed to action that will copper fasten a Pastoral Council and a Finance Committee in every single parish. In this way the following proposals will be delivered:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Leadership: develop the role of parish pastoral councils regarding parish leadership 	94	2016 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual Conference for Parish Pastoral Councils 	95	2016 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A handbook will be provided for Pastoral Leadership in Limerick Diocese 	99	2016 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Two	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
We accept the current structure no longer meets the needs and the challenges of our time. We commit to working together to ensure the establishment of a Team Ministry structure in each of the pastoral areas in the diocese. We will do this in dialogue with priests and people, building on the principles of co-responsibility and collaboration aware that we all share in the priesthood of the faithful.		2016 ongoing
<u>Further Actions:</u> This core strategic action will in turn enable subsequent delivery in our parishes of the following proposals:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Team Ministry Structure in each Pastoral Area. 	82	2016 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide and grow a model of leadership to enrich the life of individual parishes maintaining parish identity. 	83	2016 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming Hub Communities through open communication/dialogue and consultation with all individual parishes through their pastoral council. 	84	2016 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a diocesan strategy for enabling communities to become vibrant parishes, so that these parishes can be safeguarded and not suppressed. 	85	2016 ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the funding models / sources for Parish Income - clergy income and parish personnel salaries. 	86	2016 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Three	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
We will commit to the establishment of a strategic leadership group for the diocese, one with the mix of expertise to engage with the range of challenges arising from the Synod.	92, 93	2017

Core Strategic Action Four	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
We will commit to initiatives to develop and sustain a strong volunteer base in the parishes and in the diocese who will work alongside paid staff to further the mission. We see this as having two elements. A ‘structure’ of support in terms of description of roles, provision of training etc. But also we saw that for volunteerism to be sustained it needs a ‘spirit’ – a nourishment of faith and vision that Basic Christian Communities (BCC) can offer. We will commit to supporting the development of appropriate models of BCC taking into account the potential that groups such as <i>Muintearas</i> can offer. Thus the following proposals will be developed:		2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening and enabling Volunteerism in the Diocese. 	96	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discernment of the Gifts of Lay People. 	97	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To move towards the employment of Lay People to fulfil both liturgical and administrative roles in parishes, in clusters and/or in pastoral areas. 	87	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Parish/Cluster Administrative Assistants. 	88	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the introduction of the permanent diaconate into the diocese. 	90	2017

Core Strategic Action Five	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
We will as a matter of urgency establish the proposed working group on the role of women in the life of the diocese.	100	2016

Core Strategic Action Six	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
<p>Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life is something that the diocese will continue to promote. In the last few years Fr Leslie McNamara has been appointed to this position and he is developing a number of initiatives to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.</p> <p>A Forum will be established drawing representatives from each pastoral Area.</p>	91	2016 ongoing

Core Strategic Action Seven	Proposal number(s)	Timeline for Implementation
<p>Establish a working group to examine the current communications structures in this diocese.</p>	98	2017